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# TEHRAN TIMES



Andrea Anastasi confirms Iran's interest

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## India mulls \$20 billion investment in Iran

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — India is inclined to invest up to \$20 billion in Iran, Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has said.

While expressing India's willingness to invest in Iran's southeastern port of Chabahar, he said his country will make such an investment 'if conditions are provided', IRNA report-

ed on Saturday.

He made the remarks during Iran-India Business Round Table which was held in New Delhi on Saturday. ➔ 4

## Iran, Russia to continue war on terror, Rouhani says

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Saturday that Iran and Russia will continue cooperation in fighting terrorism until it is eradicated.

"There is good cooperation between Tehran and Moscow in this respect [fighting terrorism] which will continue until the final objective, which is eradication of terrorism and establishment of peace and stability in the region, is reached," he said during a meeting with Alexander Lavrentiev, the Russian president's special envoy for the Middle East.

Rouhani described terrorism as a "serious threat" to the world and highlighted the necessity of Iran-Russia cooperation in countering terrorism in the Middle East.

He also said that the crisis in Syria can be settled only through holding "political negotiation", "respecting the people's will" and "protecting the country's territorial integrity".

The president said no efforts should be spared in sending aid to civilians caught in the Syrian war.

Elsewhere, he expressed satisfaction over the current level of relations with Moscow, saying cooperation between the two countries benefits regional peace and stability. ➔ 2



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## Economy minister: Sanctions snapback impossible

Iran's Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Ali Tayyebnia says the U.S.-led sanctions, lifted under Iran's nuclear deal six world powers, could not be reimposed on the country.

Speaking at a conference on insurance industry development in Tehran, Tayyebnia described the sanctions as "irreversible", reiterating that "the wall of anti-Iran sanctions has already collapsed", with major foreign companies entering the country's lucrative market.

The Iranian minister also described the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) as an international agreement which "cannot be violated".

"Any country seeking to violate its commitments (under the JCPOA) will lose its standing and

will be internationally isolated," he was quoted as saying by IRNA news agency on Saturday.

The Iranian official said Tehran has fully implemented its commitments in this regard and it is expected that other sides would comply with their obligations under the JCPOA.

Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council — the United States, France, Britain, China and Russia — plus Germany started to implement the JCPOA on January 16.

Under the JCPOA, Iran undertook to put limitations on its nuclear program in exchange for the removal of nuclear-related bans imposed against Tehran.

Tayyebnia's comments came shortly after

the U.S. Senate unanimously approved a 10-year extension of an anti-Iran legislation.

The so-called Iran Sanctions Act (ISA) authorizes the U.S. president to impose sanctions on Iran.

The measure, which has already been passed by the House, will be sent to President Barack Obama who is expected to sign it into law.

The White House's Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz said Friday he "would expect" U.S. President Barack Obama to sign the ISA into law.

Iranian officials have described the vote as violation of the JCPOA, warning that Tehran will take retaliatory measures.

(Source: Press TV)

## Russia, Iran to debunk West's media lies over Aleppo operation

Russia and Iran are developing a joint operation to provide humanitarian aid in Aleppo, after the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) managed to liberate most of the Syrian city.

"First of all, I would like to congratulate the residents of Aleppo, which escaped from the clutches of ruthless terrorists," Hossein Sheikholeslam, the Iranian Foreign Minister's advisor, told Sputnik Persian, "Secondly, the Islamic Republic of Iran considers it its duty to the people of Aleppo to ensure that all needs of those who managed to survive and escape are met."

Sheikholeslam called attention to the fact that Iran has repeatedly taken part in humanitarian operations throughout Syria in close cooperation with the Syrian government forces and Russia.

Likewise, he stressed, Tehran is now ready to provide all necessary assistance and support to residents of Aleppo.

"We are completely prepared to carry out this joint humanitarian operation together with Russia, and we will use all our resources we have on the frontline — both military and financial. We will pro-

vide basic necessities, most notably clean drinking water, medical supplies, food, warm clothes [to Aleppo residents] and will also send our doctors and healthcare specialist [to the city]," Sheikholeslam emphasized.

According to Farzad Ramzani-Bonesh, Iranian independent expert in Middle Eastern affairs, the Russo-Iranian humanitarian operation in Aleppo will become a high-profile event which will surely surprise the West and its Arab allies in the Persian Gulf region.

"While speaking about the

joint Russo-Iranian operation aimed at providing humanitarian aid to the residents of Aleppo, one should remember some important points. Over the past two years, Western players and their Arab allies have been relentlessly accusing our countries [Russia and Iran] of providing military assistance to Bashar al-Assad on all fronts, but doing virtually nothing to save the lives of civilians caught up in the blockade," Ramzani-Bonesh told Sputnik, stressing that these allegations were totally unfounded. ➔ 13



© IRNA / Vahid Khademi

Two visually impaired children are playing piano at the IDPD, challenging not only musical notes but also all traditional notions of competence.

## Intl. Day of Persons with Disabilities marked in Iran

The Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults held a ceremony on Saturday in Tehran to mark the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD).

Attending the event were a number of children with disabilities.

The day has been celebrated annually since 1992 on 3 December around the world.

The theme for this year's International Day was "Achieving 17 Goals for the Future We Want", a reference to the recent adoption of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the role of these goals in building a more inclusive and equitable world for persons with disabilities.

## OPEC success dependent on 'grand bargain' between Iran and S. Arabia: expert

**INTERVIEW**  
By M.A. Saki

**TEHRAN** — Hossein Askari, a professor of international business at George Washington University, is highly skeptical that Arab members of OPEC stick to the November 30 agreement to reduce oil output to push prices up.

In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, Askari says, "OPEC can only succeed if Iran and Saudi Arabia reach a 'Grand Bargain' that goes way beyond an OPEC production agreement."

The agreement to cut crude only "looks good on paper", notes Askari, who served as special advisor to Saudi finance minister.

"The agreement looks good on paper, but will it last? I don't think so. I say this for a number of reasons. Look at history. OPEC can only agree on a deal when no one has anything to lose. In this deal, Saudi Arabia for one has to cut output and lose market share."

See page 13



## Terminating Iran's nuclear deal: What's at stake?

**PERSPECTIVE**  
By Mahmood Monshipouri / Shirin Jafarinasab Kermani

The nuclear deal laid the foundation for future diplomacy between Tehran and Washington, while bolstering moderate Iranian leadership at home as well as sending a clear signal to the United States of the worldwide recognition of Iran's right to civilian nuclear technology. President-elect Donald Trump frequently spoke against Iran's nuclear deal on the campaign trail, giving a vague ultimatum to the Iranian government that he would roll back the Obama administration's policy of engagement with Tehran if he becomes the president. To dismantle this hard-won diplomatic achievement, which have benefited not only Iran and the United States, but also the rest of the region, is likely to have disastrous consequences. Two questions worth contemplating at this juncture: (1) how would the new U.S. administration react to the Iran deal? and (2) will terminating the deal benefit the United States over the longer term?

Clearly, walking away from this deal would allow Iran to continue its work on the nuclear program. Moreover, it would be immensely difficult to reconstruct the same economic pressure that brought Iran to the negotiation table in the first place. That campaign, which took ten years of legislative and executive action and pressure, as well as a concerted effort toward outreach to foreign governments, produced an important result—with the added advantage of stability and détente in the region. If the United States were to walk away from the agreement, European and Asian partners would possibly not rejoin any future attempt to impose the same, consistent, and collective pressure on Iran that they have in the near past. Under such circumstances, Iran would be free from any international constraints on its nuclear program while the United States would face a colossal task of mobilizing yet another international campaign to contain or dismantle Iran's nuclear program. ➔ 13



## ARTICLE

Harun Yahya  
political analyst

## A death-dealing journey for a better life

Fear... Have you ever wondered how it feels like to live life in a constant state of fear? First you probably have to experience extreme difficulty in order to understand the magnitude of the danger that the Rohingyas are in. However since that will likely not be possible, you can never truly understand or feel how a Rohingya residing in the Rakhine State lives with threat for his or her life. They live through this persistent fear and continue their lives in very harsh conditions in several registered or mostly unregistered camps.

The world first heard their names when violent clashes between the Buddhists and Muslims arose in 2012 in Rakhine State and hundreds have been killed since then. According to the Humans Rights Watch, thousands of houses were burnt in Rohingya villages in Arakan. Even when these poor people did not appear in the news headlines, they were still exposed to unabated maltreatment and oppression. Therefore, HRW categorized them as the world's most persecuted people.

The clashes in Rakhine re-escalated when nine police officers were killed on October 9 by armed assaulters whose identities are still unknown and in response to this attack Myanmar soldiers spilled onto border of Myanmar and Bangladesh looting villages, shooting men, and raping women. This sudden increase in violence urged a great many Rohingyas to flee the country. These last forty days are considered to be the bloodiest since the 2012 clashes; more than 100 people have been killed and nearly 500 houses were burnt in these recent attacks. In addition to all these, the region suffers nearly a complete lockdown on humanitarian aid and media access as UN official Yanghee Lee complained, "It is not acceptable that for six weeks there has been a complete lockdown, with no [humanitarian] access to the affected area." ➔ 13



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Rouhani to speak on Student Day

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani is scheduled to visit the University of Tehran on December 6 on the occasion of Student Day in Iran. The president is expected to answer questions from student union representatives as has been customary in previous years, ISNA reported on Saturday.

Last year Rouhani visited the Sharif University of Technology on December 6. The day commemorates the murder of 3 students in 1953 by police in the Pahlavi era.



Iran, Bosnia insist to intensify war on terrorism

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian ambassador to Sarajevo and the Bosnian security minister in a meeting on Friday underlined the need for expanding mutual cooperation between the two countries in campaign against terrorism.

Ambassador Mahmoud Heydari and Minister Dragan Mektic explored avenues for bolstering and reinvigorating bilateral ties in political fields, especially fighting terrorist groups, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Mektic stressed Sarajevo and Tehran should exchange information on security threats in today's world.



China expected to extradite 20 Iranian convicts

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iran's attorney general has said China will hopefully extradite 20 Iranian convicts, Mehr reported on Saturday.

Mohammad Jafar Montazeri said the issue of the convicts was brought up during his recent visit to China when he met with his Chinese counterpart on the sidelines of the summit of SCO attorney generals.

Montazeri also said Iran and China discussed cooperation on fighting terrorism. He added Iran proposed that an Iranian expert team visit China to investigate areas of concern.



Narges Kalbassi meets Zarif in New Delhi

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian-British philanthropist Narges Kalbasi Ash-tari on Saturday met with Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in New Delhi during the minister's visit to India.

Born in Iran in 1989, Kalbasi moved to Britain at the age of 4. She lost her parents there. Later, she founded a charity center for orphans and disabled children in India.

However, she was charged with murder after one of the children under her care drowned in a river during a camping.

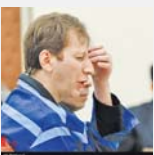


Reformist MP urges amity among government branches

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — A reformist MP on Saturday called for amity among the three executive, legislative, and judicial powers.

Referring to the recent case of arrest warrant against an MP, Masoud Pezeshkian said care should be taken so that legal actions do not create schism among government branches, ISNA reported.

Turning an easily negotiable issue into a national challenge will only benefit the enemy, Pezeshkain stressed, adding dignitaries should address Mahmoud Sadeqi's arrest warrant.



Iran Supreme Court confirms billionaire's death sentence

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Supreme Court has confirmed death sentence against billionaire businessman Babak Zanjani, Gholamreza Ansari, an official with the court, said on Saturday.

Ansari added the Supreme Court has overturned death penalty on British-Iranian national Mahdi Shams and Hamid Fallah Heravi, two of Zanjani's business associates, ILNA reported on Saturday.

Zanjani was sentenced to death last April for corruption, but he appealed the ruling.

Zanjani had been accused of money laundering as well as massive fraud in some dealings with the Oil Ministry.

Iran says ISA renewal testifies to U.S. unreliability

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Saturday the U.S. Senate vote to renew the Iran Sanctions Act (ISA) indicates that Washington is not reliable enough to deliver its commitments.

"To the world community, the extension of sanctions against Iran shows the unreliability of the American government," ISNA quoted Zarif as saying upon his arrival in India.

On Thursday, the U.S. Senate overwhelmingly voted 99-0 to extend sanctions against Iran for another ten years under the Iran Sanctions Act, in place since 1996.

The bill had already been passed two weeks ago by the House of Representatives with a landslide margin of 419-1, now at Obama's desk for final approval.

If not extended, the ISA expires by the end of 2016.

However, U.S. Congress members will see the ISA as a fast-track mechanism for any U.S. president to reinstate sanctions against Tehran.

The U.S. administration don't see the extension in breach of the nuclear deal.

"And while we don't think an extension is necessary, we've also been clear that a completely clean extension, as this one is, is entirely consistent with our commitments in the JCPOA," U.S. State Department spokesman John Kirby said on Friday.

Iran says the sanctions extension is a violation of the last year's nuclear accord with six world powers which allowed Tehran sanctions relief in exchange for a limited nuclear program.



**Iran's FM Zarif says "To the world community, the extension of sanctions against Iran shows the unreliability of the American government."**

ited nuclear program.

Zarif also dismissed the move, saying it lacks any major "executive force" so strong to thwart trade with key international players such as India, China, and

Japan.

"It will have no effect as far as it is related to India, China and Japan, and for third countries the extension makes no difference."

Velayati: Sanctions extension is 'revenge' against Iran's achievements

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Ali Akbar Velayati, the senior foreign policy advisor to the Leader, said on Saturday that the Senate's vote for extending the Iran Sanctions Act (ISA) for another 10 years is a "revenge" against Iran for its achievements.

"Achievements of Iran and the axis of resistance in the region [Middle East region] have made the U.S. and its defeated friends in the region angry and led to extension of sanctions against Iran," he told reporters after a meeting with the Russian president's special envoy in Middle East affairs Alexander Lavrentiev.

Velayati said, "This action of them [the U.S. senators] violates the JCPOA [the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Ac-



tion], because Iran was supposed to accept nuclear restrictions for a certain period of time in return for removal of unfair sanctions against us in the area of economy."

Iran will counter any violation of the JCPOA and is ready to take retaliatory actions, he added.

According to Reuters, the ISA was first adopted in 1996 to punish investments in Iran's energy industry. The extension was passed unanimously on Thursday. The ISA was first approved by the House of Representatives.

Top Iranian officials, including Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, have said the renewal of the sanctions will erode trust on the U.S. in the world.

Iran, Russia to continue war on terror, Rouhani says



Rouhani also said that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the official name for the nuclear deal between Iran and its international partners, is in line with guarding international peace and security.

And all sides should make efforts in implementing the deal and no country must be allowed to undermine the international agreement, the president asserted

"Iran has always been and will be committed to its international obligations (under the deal) and all the 5+1 group's member states should also fulfil their obligations," he insisted.

tions," he insisted.

The nuclear deal between Iran and the six major powers (the U. S., Britain, France, China and Russia plus Germany) went into effect in January.

For his part, Lavrentiev said Russia has a fixed stance on the JCPOA, adding there is no reason to undermine the nuclear deal.

He called for further cooperation between Iran and Russia on regional issues and said that Russian President Vladimir Putin attaches value to "trust" between the two countries.

'Iran-Russia ties should continue growing'

In a separate meeting with the Russian envoy, Ali Akbar Velayati, the senior foreign policy advisor to the Leader, said relations between Tehran and Moscow "should always be on the rise".

"The new situation which has been created in the world reminds us that relations between Iran and Russia should always be growing," Velayati suggested.

He described situation in the region as "volatile" and called for increasing efforts to counter threats.

White House sees ISA 'unnecessary'

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The White House has described the extension of sanctions against Iran "unnecessary", noting that the U.S. secretary of state is allowed to waive nuclear-related sanctions.

"We believe the Iran Sanctions Act (ISA) extension is not necessary, but we also believe it won't interfere with the Iran deal," spokesman Eric Schultz told reporters at a daily press briefing on Friday.

The U.S. Senate passed a bill on Thursday, extending the ISA for another 10 years. Already passed by the House of Representatives by 419-1 in November, the measure won an over-

whelming vote of 99-0 from the Senate on Thursday.

The ISA will expire on December 31 if not renewed.

"I would expect the president to sign this piece of legislation," he said.

Schultz also said that "inside that legislation, it includes a provision that would allow the secretary of state to waive relevant nuclear-related sanctions."

The spokesman saw the move consistent with both the U.S. legislation and the country's commitments made under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), adding, "That's something we've been doing since Implementation Day and that's something we'll continue



to do under our obligations of the deal as long as Iran keeps up its end of the deal as well."

ISA renewal a blow to U.S. sympathizers, Former nuclear negotiator

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — A former nuclear negotiator has said the U.S. extension of sanctions against Iran comes as a blow to the pro-American camp inside the country.

"The extension of the ISA is a clear violation of BARJAM (JCPOA), however, it is not a new move as America has on numerous occasions violated the nuclear deal so far," Ali Baqeri told Fars news agency on Saturday.

Baqeri served as the deputy secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council under President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad from 2007 to 2013.

The U.S. Senate passed a legislation on Thursday, extending the anti-Iran sanctions, officially



known as the Iran Sanction Act (ISA), for another 10 years. The measure passed the senate floor by 99-0 and is waiting President Obama for final approval.

Baqeri also branded the nuclear deal as the sore fruit of relying upon foreigners, underlining that eyeing on foreigners, what he dubbed as "imaginary points", to resolve the country's problems is doomed to failure.

"America's animosity towards the Iranian nation which appears in different forms such as human rights or the country's missile program, shows the unreliability of this despicable enemy," said Baqeri.



# China lodges protest after Trump call with Taiwan president

China lodged a diplomatic protest on Saturday after U.S. President-elect Donald Trump spoke by phone with President Tsai Ing-wen of Taiwan, but blamed the self-ruled island Beijing claims as its own for the "petty" move.

The 10-minute telephone call with Taiwan's leadership was the first by a U.S. president-elect or president since President Jimmy Carter switched diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China in 1979, acknowledging Taiwan as part of "one China".

China's Foreign Ministry said it had lodged "stern representations" with what it called the "relevant U.S. side", urging the careful handling of the Taiwan issue to avoid any unnecessary disturbances in ties.

"The one China principle is the political basis of the China-U.S. relationship," it said. The wording implied the protest had gone to the Trump camp, but the ministry provided no explanation.

Speaking earlier, hours after Friday's telephone call, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi pointedly blamed Taiwan for the exchange, rather than Trump, a billionaire businessman with little foreign policy experience.

"This is just the Taiwan side engaging in a petty action, and cannot change the 'one China' structure already formed by the international community," Wang said at an academic forum in Beijing, China's Foreign Ministry quoted him as saying.

"I believe that it won't change the longstanding 'one China' policy of the United States government."

In comments at the same forum, Wang noted how quickly President Xi



**China's Foreign Ministry said it had lodged "stern representations" with what it called the "relevant U.S. side", urging the careful handling of the Taiwan issue to avoid any unnecessary disturbances in ties.**

Jinping and Trump had spoken by telephone after Trump's victory, and that Trump had praised China as a great country.

Wang said that exchange had sent "a very positive signal about the future development of Sino-U.S. relations", according to the ministry's website. Taiwan was not mentioned in that call, according to an official Chinese transcript.

China's Taiwan Affairs Office also called the conversation a "petty" move by Taiwan that does not change the island's status as part of China. Beijing is

resolute in opposing independence for Taiwan, it added.

## Wayward province

Trump and Tsai noted that "close economic, political and security ties exist between Taiwan and the United States", the Trump transition team said in a statement. Taiwan's presidential office said the two discussed strengthening bilateral interactions and establishing closer cooperation.

China considers Taiwan a wayward province and has never renounced the use of force to bring it under its con-

trol. Relations between the two sides have worsened since Tsai, who heads the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party, was elected president in January.

China's official Xinhua news agency said Trump needed to know Beijing can be a "cooperative partner" as long as Washington respects China's core interests, including the issue of Taiwan.

Washington remains Taiwan's most important political ally and sole arms supplier, despite the lack of formal diplomatic ties, the irony of which was not lost on Trump.

Trump has eschewed tradition in other calls with foreign leaders since he won the U.S. election, prompting the White House to encourage him to make use of the diplomatic expertise and counsel of the State Department.

Administration officials said Trump's team did not alert the White House about the call ahead of time. The White House also said after Trump's call that "longstanding policy" on China and Taiwan had not changed.

Earlier this week, Trump spoke to Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and praised him, according to the Pakistani leader's office, as a "terrific guy".

Trump also invited Philippine leader Rodrigo Duterte to the White House next year during what a Duterte aide said was a "very engaging, animated" phone conversation. Duterte has openly insulted Obama, who canceled a planned meeting with him in September.

A statement issued by Trump's transition team made no mention of the invitation.

(Source: Reuters)

## 'This spells WAR!' Turkey prepares dinghies to send 3,000 migrants to Europe every day

Thousands of migrants will be released every day from Turkey and sent over to Europe as the controversial one-for-one deal collapses, intelligence officials have warned.

The Government in Turkey has prepared thousands of dinghies and mo-

torboats along the coast, Greek analysts claim, to be used if the seemingly doomed refugee deal agreed between Ankara and Brussels officially fails.

Under the agreement finalized in March, Turkey was to be paid £4 billion to care for migrant crossing from Syria.

Any migrants landing in Greece or Italy would be sent back to Turkey. As a sweetener Brussels agreed Turkish citizens would be allowed to travel without a visa in the Schengen zone.

But the deal began to fail as Europe accused Turkey of failing to stop the migrant flow and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the money was not being paid.

Erdogan threatened to open the borders if the EU continued to block talks on the country's accession to the union.

After a failed military coup in July Europe angered Turkey by distancing itself from the country.

The European Parliament voted to temporarily halt membership talks when the ruling AK party announced a brutal crackdown on dissent and threatened to bring back the death penalty.

Erdogan warned: "If you go any further, these border gates will be opened. Neither me nor my people will be affected by these dry threats. It wouldn't matter if all of you approved the vote."

But according to Greek newspaper Proto Thema, Ankara has given up on hope of Brussels living up to its side of the deal and could start allowing the refugees to flee "within a matter of weeks".

Currently, there are around four million migrants in camps across the whole of Turkey, which shares a border with Syria.

Greek intelligence expert Athanasios Drougas told The Times: "No one is un-

derestimating Erdogan and his unpredictability these days.

"These plans, along with explicit threats that the Turkish president has made in recent weeks, have Greece's joint chiefs of staff seriously concerned.

"They are fearful and they have told the political leadership here that if Turkey opens the floodgates yet again, Greece, in its current state of financial and social distress, will not be able to withstand the shock.

"It will spell war or wreak the havoc of one.

"With Europe in a mess, Erdogan feels he has a free hand in trying to blackmail the bloc using the refugee crisis as leverage."

Greece has been battling the migrant crisis and trying to rescue desperate refugees from the sea on a daily basis for the whole of 2016 and much of 2015.

Currently more than 60,000 refugees are living in refugee camps in Greece after several Balkan countries sealed their borders.

Many remain stuck on islands in the Aegean with frequent fires and disorder breaking out in the large, unsanitary camps.

Over a million refugees, mostly from Syria and Iraq, arrived in Europe last year with many coming via the Aegean and Mediterranean seas or overland through Turkey.

(Source: express.co.uk)

## Indonesian police plane with 15 on board goes missing

A twin-engine Indonesian police plane went missing on Saturday with 15 people on board en route to the island of Batam, south of Singapore, police and rescue authorities said, as search teams scoured the area.

The plane, which took off from Pangkal Pinang on the island of Bangka at around 9.30 a.m. is thought to have crashed between the islands of Mensanak and Sebangka or Gentar, a police report seen by Reuters said.

A search team recovered items apparently identified as being from the missing aircraft, including seats, luggage and documents, the report said, noting that according to the manifest there were 15 people on board.

According to Indonesia's Search and Rescue Agency (BASARNAS), items belonging to passengers had also been found.

"We found debris," BASARNAS chief Bambang Soelistyo told Reuters, adding his team were searching in a 200 square

nautical mile area.

Soelistyo said it was too soon to assume there were no survivors and that no remains of those aboard had been found, although there were no reports of survivors.

Up to four police vessels were searching the area, he said, along with navy vessels.

According to a statement from the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS), the last known radar position of the aircraft was about 40 nautical miles southeast of Tanjung Pinang.

"With clearance from the Indonesian authorities, one SuperPuma helicopter and one Fokker 50 are currently on-scene supporting the Indonesians to locate the aircraft," the statement said. "Two ships are awaiting clearance by the Indonesian authorities to assist in the search and rescue efforts."

(Source: Reuters)

## Amid labor chaos, Saudi Arabia sacks minister

Saudi Arabia has sacked its labor minister after only seven months in office amid rising criticism over unpaid foreign workers.

Saudi king Salman fired Mufarrej al-Haqbani, replacing him with Ali al-Ghifaidh in an official decree on Friday. The government is yet to provide any official justification for the move.

Haqbani's time in office was marked by a labor crisis that has been plaguing Saudi Arabia for months. Industrial firms have failed to either pay or provide basic amenities for hordes of their workers for months on end.

The companies, most notably the construction behemoths of Bin Ladin Group and Saudi Oger, have been hit by Saudi Arabia's massive budget deficit in the face of its military campaign in Yemen.

The deficit, which shot up to 98 billion dollars last year, has worsened by falling oil prices, a crisis of Saudi Arabia's own making. Oil revenues comprise 80 percent of the Saudi income but the country has been manipulating prices by creating gluts through overproduction.

At least 30,000 workers, mostly employees of Bin Ladin and Oger companies, from India, Pakistan and the Philippines are stranded in Saudi Arabia.

Last month, Pakistan said hundreds of its nationals, who have been waiting for months to receive their salaries from a Saudi construction firm, would fly home without any payment.

In other decrees on Friday, Salman removed the director general of the customs department and fired the secretary general of the Shura Council, which advises the cabinet.

Saudi Arabia's costly war on Yemen has hit its economy hard.

Riyadh has spent billions of dollars to purchase various types of munitions from its Western allies for the war, which has been going on since March 2015. The U.S. approved more than 20 billion dollars in military sales to Saudi Arabia last year alone.

The cash crunch has prompted Riyadh to even slash public bonuses and the salaries of ministers. (Source: Press TV)

Former Saudi Labor Minister Mufarrej al-Haqbani



## Aung San Suu Kyi accuses international community of stoking unrest in Myanmar

Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi accused the international community on Friday of stoking resentment between Buddhists and Muslims in the country's northwest, where an army crackdown has killed at least 86 people and sent 10,000 fleeing to Bangladesh. Aung San Suu Kyi appealed for understanding of her nation's ethnic complexities.

"I would appreciate it so much if the international community would help us to maintain peace and stability, and to make progress in building better relations between the two communities, instead of always drumming up cause for bigger fires of resentment," Aung San Suu Kyi told Singapore state-owned broadcaster Channel News Asia during a visit to the city-state.

### Attacks against police outposts

"It doesn't help if everybody is just concentrating on the negative side of the situation, in spite of the fact that there were attacks against police outposts."

The violence in the northwest poses the biggest challenge so far to Aung San Suu Kyi's eight-month-old government, and has renewed international criticism that the Nobel Peace Prize winner has done too little to help the country's Rohingya Muslim minority.

Her comments come as Malaysia said Myanmar's treatment of the Rohingya amounted to "ethnic cleansing".

The "fact that only one particular ethnicity is being driven out is by definition ethnic cleansing," Malaysia's foreign ministry said in a statement.

"This practice must stop, and must be stopped immediately in order to bring back security and stability to the Southeast Asian region."

Muslim-majority Malaysia has been increasingly critical of Myanmar's handling of violence in northern Rakhine state.

Soldiers have poured into the north of Rakhine State, close to the frontier with Bangladesh, after attacks on border posts on 9 October that killed nine police officers. Humanitarian aid has been cut off to the area, which is closed to outside observers.

Myanmar's military and the government have rejected allegations by residents and human rights groups that soldiers have raped Rohingya women, burned houses and killed civilians during the operation.

Aung San Suu Kyi's remarks came as a commission led by former United Nations chief Kofi Annan arrived in the state, where ethnic Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims have lived separately since clashes in 2012 in which more than 100 people were killed.

Despite often having lived in Myanmar for generations, most of the country's 1.1 million Rohingya are denied citizenship, freedom of movement and access to basic services such as healthcare and education.

The UN's human rights agency said last week that abuses suffered by the Rohingya may amount to a crimes against humanity, repeating a statement it first made in a June report.

(Source: The Guardian)



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- After evaluation of applicants willing to participate in the tender, qualified and eligible applicants will be invited to participate in the tender.



## Lebanon calls for co-op with Iran in auto industry

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Lebanese Industry Minister Hussein Elhaji Hassan has voiced his country's interest in cooperation with Iran in auto industry and co-production of cars in Lebanon, IRNA reported on Saturday.

According to the report, the minister made the remarks on Friday in the opening ceremony of Iranian Automaker Saipa's representative office in Lebanon.

Iran's ambassador to Lebanon Mohammad Fathali, Saipa's Managing Director Mehdi Jamali and a handful of Iranian and Lebanese officials also attended the opening ceremony.

## Iran to host 20th general meeting, conference of ACG

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — To be hosted by Central Securities Depository of Iran (CSDI), the 20th general meeting and conference of Asia-Pacific Central Securities Depository Group (ACG) is due to be held on December 5-9 in Tehran, IRIB news reported on Saturday, quoting the managing director of CSDI.

According to Mohammadreza Mohseni, Iran which joined AGC in 2012, hosted the ACG conference in 2014 and this year the country will host the group's general meeting for the first time.

ACG was founded in November 1997 as an informal international organization and has been holding annual meetings since then.

The organization has 34 members from various countries in the region including Iran, China, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Bangladesh, Hong Kong, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Mongolia, Singapore, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand and Uzbekistan.

## France's Faurecia forms new joint-ventures in Iran

Faurecia announced on Friday the signature of its third joint-venture agreement with Iranian partners.

The "Faurecia Crouse Advanced Exhaust System Co." joint-venture for emissions control systems was signed in Paris between Faurecia and MAAD, a Crouse and Avrand joint-venture.

This new agreement was signed in the presence of Ali Ahani, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in France, Patrick Koller, CEO of Faurecia, Christophe Schmitt, Executive Vice-President of Faurecia Emissions Control Technologies, Mohammad Alipour and Hamid Keshavarz, founders & co-owners of Crouse, Reza Samadi of Avrand, and other officials.

With this third joint-venture, all three Faurecia business groups will be present in Iran.

(Source: Faurecia.com)

## OPEC to meet non-OPEC producers on Dec. 10 in Moscow

OPEC will meet non-OPEC countries to finalize a global oil limiting pact on Dec. 10 in the Russian capital Moscow, two OPEC sources told Reuters on Friday.

OPEC agreed this week to reduce output by around 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd) beginning in January in a bid to reduce global oversupply and prop up prices.

It hopes non-OPEC countries will contribute another 600,000 bpd to the cut. Russia has said it will reduce output by around 300,000 bpd.

(Source: Reuters)

## South Korea wants to oust coins from circulation by 2020

The Bank of Korea on Thursday announced that it will focus efforts on eliminating coins and becoming a cashless society by 2020, Financial Times reports.

As of now, the highest value South Korean coin is worth less than \$0.50, according to FT. The central bank hopes to achieve its aim of getting rid of coins by encouraging consumers to exchange loose change for "T money" cards that can be used for metro and taxi fares, in addition to convenience stores. South Korea has significantly weaned itself off a reliance on physical money, with just 20 percent of transactions in the high-tech nation using physical money, according to the Bank of Korea.

"When we make a 10 won coin, it costs more than 10 won," Lee Hyo-chan of the Credit Finance Institute in Seoul told the publication. Others are more optimistic about the benefits of the move. "If we abandon cash, we could see 1.2 percent extra economic growth a year. A cashless society can help us tackle low growth, low inflation and the low-interest environment," according to economic researcher Kim Seong-hoon.

Some countries, including the U.S., might also benefit from scaling back the use of coins. For example, U.S. economist Robert Whaples argues that the U.S. should eliminate the penny for the simple reason that value of the metal in a penny is greater than the single cent that it represents. The U.S. government wastes \$900 million per year making pennies, according to Whaples' research.

(Source: Sputnik)

# India mulls \$20 billion investment in Iran



Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, senior managers from Iranian and Indian chambers of commerce, banks, and other sectors including industry, trade, and science attended the business forum, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Pradhan also said that the two countries can increase bilateral oil and gas trade. He, in addition, showed his country's willingness to participate in the development of Iranian Farzad-B gas field in the Persian Gulf.

### \$30b trade possible

During the meeting, the chairman of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, Gholam-Hossein Shafei, said the current level of bilateral trade is not proportional to potentialities, saying that the value of trade can reach \$30 billion in the future.

Shafei underlined that possessing huge energy resources, the Islamic Republic can act as a reliable source to meet India's need to energy.

He, elsewhere, named transportation



Indian Petroleum & Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan (L), Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafei, and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif (R) (PHOTO/IRNA: Yousef Ali Naqavi)

sector as one of the possible fields of cooperation between the two countries,

adding that the recently signed trilateral agreement between Iran, Afghanistan,

## Tehran, Wellington may reach \$1b trade turnover: New Zealander min.

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The visiting New Zealand's Trade Minister Todd McClay, during the Saturday meeting held to investigate Iran-New Zealand trade opportunities in Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), expressed hope that the two sides will witness an increase in their mutual trade value up to \$1 billion per annum, the portal of ICCIMA reported.

During the meeting, the New Zealander minister discussed available opportunities to expand ties with the Islamic Republic with the First Vice President of ICCIMA Pedram Soltani.

Noting that his country's companies are poised to commence their ties with their Iranian counterparts despite some present banking impediments, he added that talks are underway to improve the conditions.

McClay also informed that the New Zealander agriculture minister plans to make a trip to Tehran in 2017 to negotiate development of agro ties with his Iranian counterpart.

Soltani, for his part, recommended the formation of a working group in charge of investigating mutual cooperation cases and exploring potentials to make joint ventures.

The ICCIMA first vise president admitted that till the present time, majority of mutual trade between the two countries has been done via exchanging goods, while supplying each other with quality services and transferring technological know-how can stand among future cooperation fields.

McClay led a senior-level business delegation on New Zealand's first trade mission to Tehran in twelve



years, on Friday. He has been invited by the Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

## Armenian exports of miniature cattle meat to Iran significantly rises

**YEREVAN (Armenpress)** — Armenia has exported nearly 2179 tons of miniature cattle meat to the Islamic Republic of Iran by December 2, 2016 against the 681.8 tons exported during the entire year of 2015. 1025 tons out of the 2179 was exported after September 22, "Armenpress" was informed from the press service of the Ministry of Agriculture of Armenia.

Minister of Agriculture of Armenia Ignati Arakelyan had received

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Iran to Armenia Seyyed Kazem Sajjad on October 18 to discuss future development between the two states.

During the meeting the sides stressed the necessity to foster the activities of the inter-agency working group, highlighting activation of cooperation in the spheres of breeding, seed, development of greenhouses, floriculture and fisheries.

## Banks to Britain: stagger Brexit over years or we could leave

Britain must negotiate a staggered departure from the European Union over several years or risk banks leaving the country, the biggest banking lobby group will warn the government in coming weeks, according to sources familiar with the matter.

The British Bankers' Association will argue its case in a report to Prime Minister Theresa May's government, outlining the risks for the country if she does not secure a "transition" phase beyond the two-year withdrawal period that will begin when she invokes Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty.

The document also calls for a clear message from the government about its vision of Brexit, following perceived mixed messages from ministers about the importance they place on retaining access to the EU single market.

"We're saying we need an adaptation period ... to stop banks moving en masse," said one person familiar with the report, speaking on condition of anonymity as the proposals have not been made public.

The BBAs draft report is the first blueprint about how a transition could work - and spelling out the risks if it is absent.

The BBA declined to comment.

May has said she will invoke Article 50 by the end of March 2017, starting formal withdrawal negotiations with Brussels, meaning Britain would leave in early 2019.

Banks and businesses have long warned of the need to



avoid a "cliff edge" or abrupt British exit from the bloc without advance knowledge about how trading terms might look.

If no deal has been agreed for Britain to retain some access to the single market after the two years of talks, UK-based banks may be forced to withdraw services to EU customers and vice versa unless they relocate to the continent.

### Adaptation

Under the currently envisaged timetable, the BBA will warn, banks will not have enough time to prepare themselves for Brexit and their possible departure from London.

It would take banks more than two years to relocate operations, according to the report, warning that if no transition phase is allowed, they may be forced to leave the

## Hyundai Heavy near deal with Iran for 10 ships: media

Hyundai Heavy Industries Co., a major shipyard in South Korea, looks set to clinch a deal with Iran to supply 10 ships, a news report said Saturday.

Under the expected contract, valued at \$650 million, with the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL), Hyundai will build four 14,400 TEU container ships and six 50,000 DWT product tankers, according to TradeWins, a global shipping news service.

The ships will be delivered starting in the third quarter of 2018, it added.

If signed, the contract will be Iran's first deal with a foreign shipbuilder since the lifting of international sanctions on the Middle Eastern nation.

Iran is seeking a series of ship-related contracts via the IRISL to handle increasing trade cargo.

Hyundai officials were cautious about the issue.

"(We) are in consultations (with the Iranian side on the possible contract) but it's not decided yet," a company official said. (Source: koreaherald.com)



### Russia's Lukoil co-owner won't rule out stake sale to Rosneft: RBC

Leonid Fedun, a major shareholder and vice president at Russia's No.2 oil producer Lukoil, has not ruled out selling his stake to Kremlin-controlled Rosneft, RBC newspaper reported on Saturday.

Fedun, who owns little less than 10 percent in the company, told the newspaper that "in theory" Rosneft may acquire Lukoil.

Rosneft, owned by Igor Sechin, a long-standing ally of President Vladimir Putin, became the world's largest listed oil producer by output when it bought Anglo-Russian firm TNK-BP in 2013. Last month, it also acquired mid-sized oil producer Bashneft.



### Deutsche Bank cuts ties with 3,400 clients in trading business

Deutsche Bank's Global Markets division will cut ties with about 3,400 clients in its debt and equities sales activities, the bank said on Friday.

Deutsche Bank will immediately cease debt sales services to some financial institutions and hedge funds as well as equity sales activities, the execution of equities trading orders and equity structuring activities for some clients, a spokesman said, citing an internal memo.

Germany's biggest bank is looking to shed clients that cost more to service than they bring in returns as part of efforts to turn around its business and boost its capital.



### DP World, Quebec's Caisse to create C\$5b investment vehicle

based ports operator DP World Ltd said it had partnered with Caisse de depot et placement du Quebec, Canada's second-biggest public pension fund, to create a C\$5 billion (\$3.76 billion) investment vehicle.

The partnership will invest in ports and terminals, focusing on investment grade countries, the companies said on Friday.

DP World will have a 55 percent stake in the partnership, while Caisse will hold the rest, the companies said.



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## Is James Mattis any threat to democracy?

President-elect Donald Trump's intention to nominate James Mattis as secretary of defense places Congress in a bind. Is it duty-bound to reject an obviously well-qualified person for the job? Or would confirming Mattis, a retired four-star general, endanger the nation's founding tradition of civilian control of the military?

The problem is that Mattis retired from the Marines only four years ago, short of the seven-year waiting period mandated by Congress. The law was broken once before, for George Marshall in 1950. Marshall was a special case: The former highest-ranking U.S. military official in World War II, he had already served as secretary of state, lending his name to the post-war rebuilding project in Western Europe. But when Congress voted to make an exception for Marshall, lawmakers insisted it be a one-time deal, stating that "no additional appointments of military men to that office shall be approved."

Today's Congress is not bound by the wishes of its forbears from 65 years ago, of course. But it owes them -- as well as the authors of the Constitution, the Federalist Papers and other founding documents -- the utmost care in making another exception. While the idea of a military coup in the U.S. may seem absurd today, the Founders were wise to be wary of standing armies and officers corps amassing powers to rival those of the commander in chief. Congress may ultimately decide that Mattis is well worth setting aside the rule. But his confirmation hearings should devote as much attention to his views on military-civilian relations as to what Pentagon reforms he proposes or how he wants to defeat Islamic State terrorists (ISIL).

As President Dwight D. Eisenhower demonstrated -- by extricating the U.S. from the Korean War and keeping the Suez Crisis from becoming World War III -- military leaders tend to be extremely wary of putting troops' lives at risk, and that's a virtue in any defense secretary. Mattis, in particular, is both a legendary fighter and an erudite soldier-scholar nicknamed "the Warrior Monk." If confirmed, he might also be a calming influence on Mike Flynn, the irascible former general Trump has chosen to be national security adviser -- someone Mattis outranked in the military by a star.

Ideally, Congress's confirmation hearings on Mattis will become a chance to publicly consider what role the military should play in American society during a time of war against terrorism. When that's done, Congress may very well find that James Mattis is as deserving as George Marshall of special consideration.

(Source: Bloomberg)



James Mattis

# America must recognize Palestine



By Jimmy Carter

We do not yet know the policy of the next administration toward Israel and Palestine, but we do know the policy of this administration. It has been President Obama's aim to support a negotiated end to the conflict based on two states, living side by side in peace.

That prospect is now in grave doubt. I am convinced that the United States can still shape the future of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict before a change in presidents, but time is very short. The simple but vital step this administration must take before its term expires on Jan. 20 is to grant American diplomatic recognition to the state of Palestine, as 137 countries have already done, and help it achieve full United Nations membership.

### ■ The Camp David Accords

Back in 1978, during my administration, Israel's prime minister, Menachem Begin, and Egypt's president, Anwar Sadat, signed the Camp David Accords. That agreement was based on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, which was passed in the aftermath of the 1967 war. The key words of that resolution were "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East in which every state in the area can live in security," and the "withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict."

The agreement was ratified overwhelmingly by the Parliaments of Egypt and Israel. And those two foundational concepts have been the basis for the policy of the United States government and the international community ever since.

This was why, in 2009, at the beginning of his first administration, Obama reaffirmed the crucial elements of the



President Barack Obama watches Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, left, and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas shake hands during a 2009 meeting in New York

**United States recognition of a Palestinian state would make it easier for other countries that have not recognized Palestine to do so, and would clear the way for a Security Council resolution on the future of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Carter said.**

Camp David agreement and Resolution 242 by calling for a complete freeze on the building of settlements, constructed illegally by Israel on Palestinian territory. Later, in 2011, the president made clear that "the borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on the 1967 lines," and added, "negotiations should result in two states, with permanent Palestinian borders with Israel, Jordan and Egypt, and permanent Israeli borders with Palestine."

Today, however, 38 years after Camp David, the commitment to peace is in danger of abrogation. Israel is building more and more settlements, displacing Palestinians and entrenching its occupation of Palestinian lands. Over 4.5 million Palestinians live in these occupied territories, but are not citizens of Israel. Most live largely under Israeli military rule, and do not vote in Israel's national elections.

Meanwhile, about 600,000 Israeli settlers in Palestine enjoy the benefits of Israeli citizenship and laws. This process is hastening a one-state reality that could destroy Israeli democracy and will result in intensifying international condemnation of Israel.

### ■ An avenue toward peace

The Carter Center has continued to support a two-state solution by hosting discussions this month with Israeli and Palestinian representatives, searching for an avenue toward peace. Based on the positive feedback from those talks, I am certain that United States recognition of a Palestinian state would make it easier for other countries that have not recognized Palestine to do so, and would clear the way for a Security Council resolution on the future of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Security Council should pass a

resolution laying out the parameters for resolving the conflict. It should reaffirm the illegality of all Israeli settlements beyond the 1967 borders, while leaving open the possibility that the parties could negotiate modifications. Security guarantees for both Israel and Palestine are imperative, and the resolution must acknowledge the right of both the states of Israel and Palestine to live in peace and security. Further measures should include the demilitarization of the Palestinian state, and a possible peacekeeping force under the auspices of the United Nations.

A strong Security Council resolution would underscore that the Geneva Conventions and other human rights protections apply to all parties at all times. It would also support any agreement reached by the parties regarding Palestinian refugees.

The combined weight of United States recognition, United Nations membership and a Security Council resolution solidly grounded in international law would lay the foundation for future diplomacy. These steps would bolster moderate Palestinian leadership, while sending a clear assurance to the Israeli public of the worldwide recognition of Israel and its security.

This is the best -- now, perhaps, the only -- means of countering the one-state reality that Israel is imposing on itself and the Palestinian people. Recognition of Palestine and a new Security Council resolution are not radical new measures, but a natural outgrowth of America's support for a two-state solution.

The primary foreign policy goal of my life has been to help bring peace to Israel and its neighbors. That September in 1978, I was proud to say to a joint session of Congress, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." As Begin and Sadat sat in the balcony above us, the members of Congress stood and applauded the two heroic peacemakers.

I fear for the spirit of Camp David. We must not squander this chance.

(Source: The NYT)

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### TAJ MAHAL ANNOUNCES ITS SECOND RESTAURANT MAHI - MAHI



By Mina Ahmadi

Iran's pollution, a decades-old problem, has progressively increased in recent years, claiming several lives each year and damaging healthy lungs.

Economic activists believe that the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) has opened a new horizon to promotion of economic situation in Iran and has paved the ground for importing of electric vehicles to the country which are considered as a zero-emissions.

An electric car is an automobile that is propelled by one electric motor or more, using electrical energy stored in batteries or another energy storage device. A hybrid vehicle is a vehicle that uses two or more distinct power sources to move the vehicle.

Iran's most recent official statistics indicates that air pollution in Tehran has claimed lives of 412 citizens in the October 22 to November 13 period, forcing schools in the capital city to be shut down for several days.

The geographic situation of Iran's big cities—most significantly, mountainous Tehran—is only one of the roots of this problem. The overwhelming number of vehicles has largely contributed to this dilemma.

Recently the representatives of Tehran in Majlis have sent a letter to President Hassan Rouhani calling on him to pay special attention to the

issue of air pollution in the capital. 35 Tehran representatives in Majlis out of total 290 lawmakers in the parliament have called on the President to order the related organizations to find due solution to the air pollution question and make serious decisions about it.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), air pollution is one of the leading causes of cancer. The fact is that people are more exposed to air pollutants in industrialized areas and metropolises where exhaust gas and auto-industrial emission can create a hazardous situation. This has increased health problems such as cardiovascular diseases, heart attack, stroke, asthma, allergy and cancer.

While Iran is fully determined to end its relying on heavily-subsidized fossil fuels through the implementation of a targeted subsidy plan known as 'subsidy reform plan', it has concentrated efforts to put CNG cars and electric vehicles on its roads.

Up to now, the Iranian transportation and fuel management employees have tried to replace gas and

### Tehran municipality has planned to bring hundreds electric motorcycles and hybrid taxis to the streets of the capital.

diesel vehicles with CNGs vehicles to great success, especially in the public transportation sector.

But such replacements seem to be insufficient as the air pollution is getting worse particularly in major cities, and the main culprit is low-standard gasoline as well as overproduction of cars by domestic manufacturers.

To settle the problem, Tehran municipality has planned to bring hundreds electric motorcycles and hybrid taxis to the streets of the capital.

#### Iran supports import of hybrid transportation systems

On Feb 2016, Deputy Head of the Department of the Environment (DOE) Saeed Motesadi underscored that Iran would support import of electric and hybrid transportation systems in a bid to preserve the environment and reduce pollution in big cities.

Motesadi reiterated that current circumstances are favorable for the import of electric and hybrid cars and all commercial and customs charges on their imports have been removed in Iran, adding that the electric cars have been produced that can run up to 400 kilometers by only one charge

that can be a major help to ridding of pollution in megacities.

Regarding DOE's foundation policy to remove sources of pollution, the official stressed that, the department endorses import of electric and hybrid cars into the country.

#### JCPOA's key role for import of eco-friendly electric cars

Meanwhile, Managing Director of Datis Khodro Co., Milad Alinaqi believes that the implementation of JCPOA has opened a new horizon to promotion of economic situation in Iran and has paved the ground for importing of electric vehicles to the country.

The veteran expert in hybrid cars, Alinaqi, added that environmentally-friendly vehicles produce zero emission, adding, "It is not so far-fetched that with their emergence in the country we would experience less pollution nationwide."

Alinaqi considers the utilizing the green vehicles are considered as a practical solution for settlement of the country's air pollution.

He believes that lack of information about the Hybrid cars' state-of-art technologies in Iran is the main reason behind meager employment



of such vehicles across the country.

Managing Director of Datis Khodro Co., reiterated that the demands for electric vehicles would gradually increase as necessary centers for delivering after-sales service be established across the country.

Citing Iranian market as an "active and dynamic", Alinaqi stressed that the country enjoys huge untapped potentials for entrance of foreign investors in private sector, auto industry in particular.

Alinaqi also expressed hope that the ground could be properly paved for entrance global automakers in Iran and they could produce the products in the Islamic Republic.

#### Eliminates electric, hybrid vehicle import tariffs

In May 2014, Iranian government announced that it had eliminated import tariffs on electric and hybrid cars with engines of 2500cc and smaller. This surprise move shocked both local and foreign car fanatics, with some even commenting on how an "Oil producing country would even be interested in electrics and hybrids."

Iranian Deputy Industry, Mine, and Trade Minister Valiollah Afkhamirad stressed that this is the first time Iran has dropped import tariffs on electric and hybrid class cars.

The astounding move which is still unknown to most is to "to boost domestic production and make the auto industry competitive" again.

This resulted in, various people believe, a deterioration of quality of the locally produced cars and allowed three major car manufacturers to form an effective oligopoly between them.

In conclusion, air pollution in Iran stems from various factors including great number of cars as well as the clunkers, motorcycles, and mines surrounding the city, and occasional dust storms originating from hot-spots which used to be wetland and are now dried up due to mismanagement of the water resources.

To tackle all these problems different organizations must get involved to formulate coherent policies to reduce this persisting predicament.

As carburetor motorcycles are responsible for a great deal of harmful emissions replacing them with electric motorcycles would play a significant role in mitigating the air pollution.

For a metropolis like Tehran, where at large number of people dies each year from diseases caused by air pollution, there are no other options but to put aside the vehicles with internal combustion engines and shift to the vehicles with zero emissions.



**Managing Director of Datis Khodro Co., Milad Alinaqi believes that the implementation of JCPOA has opened a new horizon to promotion of economic situation in Iran and has paved the ground for importing of electric vehicles to the country.**

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# Can a change in the weather make you sick?

By Kristina Duda

It seems like every time the weather changes significantly—specifically from warm to cold—suddenly a lot of people get sick. Many people blame the weather when they don't feel well. Whether it's an increase in the number of colds you get or you just don't feel great when there is a significant weather change, there has to be something to this phenomenon, right? Could a change in temperature really make people sick?

## Does cold weather cause colds?

The answer is both yes and no. Germs make people sick, not air temperatures. But research has shown that viruses that cause illnesses such as the common cold and other respiratory infections do spread more easily in cool, dry conditions. The viruses that cause these illnesses also adhere to dry nasal passages more easily, where they multiply, spread through your body, and make you sick.

So, technically, it's not the temperature of the air around you that is making you sick, but it does make it easier to get sick. Taking steps to keep yourself healthy can reduce your chances of getting sick, but it's more likely to happen in colder temperatures no matter what you do.

Additionally, people tend to stay inside and in closer contact with other people when the weather is cold. Closer proximity to sick people means you are more likely to get sick as well. Kids, especially, share their germs far better than they share their toys.

So it's no surprise that illnesses run rampant through schools and daycares every fall, winter, and spring. Rates of contagious illness are frequently higher when people live in close proximity to each other—dormitories, nursing homes, and even hospitals. Because people are in closer contact with a greater number of people more frequently in these environments, germs spread more easily, even when we take precautions to prevent that from happening.

This is why hospitals often enact visitor restrictions during cold and flu season, so people who are there to get better don't end up getting sicker.

## What about chronic illnesses?

People with chronic conditions such as asthma truly can be affected by changes in the temperature. Significant changes in air temperature or quality can cause asthma flares. In cases like this, a person is not sick due to an infection, but the symp-



**There is evidence that the weather has an effect on germs and how likely we are to get sick, but it's still not the temperature itself that is causing your sniffles, sneezes, and cough.**

toms of an asthma attack can be severe just because of a change in the weather. If you or your child tends to have problems with your asthma when the weather changes, be sure to discuss this with your doctor. Make sure you are on good maintenance medications and you have an asthma action plan in place so you know what to do if your symptoms worsen.

Those with chronic pain may be impacted by changes in temperature or barometric pressure. If you have arthritis, fibromyalgia, or another condition that causes chronic pain you may have increased difficulty when the weather gets colder.

Pay attention to the weather changes that affect you the most and you will be better prepared to deal with them in the future.

There are many other chronic health conditions that may be affected by the weather as well. If you have a condition that seems to be chronic, discuss what you can do to manage the symptoms when weather changes occur with your doctor. Attempting to be prepared can make dealing with the changes in weather a little easier.

## What you can do to stay healthy

Regardless of what is causing your symptoms—whether it's the change in temperature or the germs that are spreading in the cooler air—there are steps you can take to keep yourself as healthy as possible.

Simple things like washing your hands frequently will go a long way to avoiding illness. Make sure you are washing your hands correctly and frequently. If your skin gets dry after washing them, use a moisturizing lotion to avoid cracks in the skin. Make sure you wash your hands before and after preparing food, before eating, after using the bathroom and after changing diapers.

Try to avoid touching your face. This one is really hard, but the primary way we get sick is when germs enter our body through the eyes, mouth, or nose. If you have germs on your hands (which you do unless you just finished washing them), you can easily infect yourself when you touch your face with your hands. If you stop and think about it, you probably do this much more than you realize. Try to make a conscious effort to avoid touching your face when you are out in public or around people that you know are sick.

Use hand sanitizer if you can't wash your hands. Especially before you eat. If you are out at a restaurant, there is no telling what germs you have come into contact with between your house and those steaming hot rolls the waiter just put down in front of you. Before you grab one and start eating it, either go wash your hands or use hand sanitizer. No one wants a yeast roll with a side of rhinovirus.

Make healthy food choices. Get adequate sleep (ideally seven to nine hours for adults). Exercise regularly. Doing all of these things consistently will allow your body to fight off infections. Your immune system won't work as well as it needs to if your body isn't healthy. There's no guarantee that you will never get sick if you take care of your body, but chances are good it will happen a lot less often.

If you have a chronic health condition like asthma, make sure you are taking your maintenance medications or following the care plan your health care provider has laid out for you. Everyone manages their chronic conditions differently, but making sure you are following your doctor's instructions will help minimize the effects you will experience when weather changes occur.

Get a flu vaccine. This won't protect you from every respiratory illness, but influenza is one of the most severe and we are all susceptible to it. Getting a flu vaccine every flu season will help protect you and those around you from dealing with it. Even if you aren't in a high risk group, the flu is highly contagious and you could pass it on to someone who is before you even know you are sick. The flu vaccine cannot give you the flu, so get the shot and protect yourself.

## A word from VeryWell

People often want to blame their illnesses on the weather. It's easy to assume that because the temperature dropped, that's why you feel so bad now. But as we say in the research world, "correlation does not equal causation." Meaning, just because two things appear to be related that does not mean one is causing the other to occur.

There is evidence that the weather has an effect on germs and how likely we are to get sick, but it's still not the temperature itself that is causing your sniffles, sneezes, and cough.

Take precautions to keep yourself healthy year-round, and you will be less affected by temperature changes and cold weather when it occurs.

(Source: [verywell.com](http://verywell.com))

## Study links busy schedules to better cognitive function

Staying busy may improve your memory, suggests a study published May 17, 2016, in *Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience*.

Researchers examined 330 adults ages 50 to 89 from the Dallas Lifespan Brain Study. Participants rated their daily busyness with a questionnaire. Sample questions included, "How often do you have too many things to do each day to actually get them all done?" and "How often do you have so many things to do that you go to bed later than your regular bedtime?"

Each question was answered on a 5-point scale, with higher scores indicating greater busyness. The participants also underwent tests to gauge memory, information processing speed, reasoning, and vocabulary. Those with average busyness scores of 4 to 5 had better cognitive function scores than those with busyness numbers closer to 1 or 2. The greatest effect from busyness was with episodic memory, which is the memory of past events like times and places.

While the study did not explore the underlying mechanisms at play between busyness and cognitive function, and the results were limited by self-reporting, the researchers noted the two appear to be linked. "It is possible that people with higher mental function lead busier lives, but staying busy and active may be a proxy for mental stimulation, which leads to intellectual growth," says lead researcher Dr. Sara Festini of the University of Texas, Dallas. (Source: [health.harvard.edu](http://health.harvard.edu))

## Ban calls for full, equal participation of persons with disabilities in an inclusive, sustainable world

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his message on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 3 December 2016, called for the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in an inclusive and sustainable world that embraces humanity in all its diversity.

The full text of his message reads:

Ten years ago this month, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. One of the most widely ratified international human rights instruments, with 169 Parties, the Convention has spurred significant progress in commitment and action

**"I urge national and local governments, businesses and all actors in society to intensify efforts to end discrimination and remove the environmental and attitudinal obstacles that prevent persons with disabilities from enjoying their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights."**

for equality, inclusion and empowerment around the world, with disability being increasingly incorporated into the global human rights and development agendas.

This year, United Nations Member States have embarked on implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, our blueprint for peace, prosperity, dignity and opportunity for all on a healthy planet. With its 17 interdependent Sustainable Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda is based on a pledge to leave no one behind. Achieving this requires the full inclusion and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society and development.

Much remains to be accomplished before persons with disabilities can realize their full potential as equal and valued members of society. We must eliminate the stereotypes and discrimination that perpetuate their exclusion and build an accessible, enabling and inclusive environment for all. For the 2030 Agenda to succeed, we must include persons with disabilities in implementation and monitoring and use the Convention as a guide.

On this International Day of Persons with Disabilities, I urge national and local governments, businesses and all actors in society to intensify efforts to end discrimination and remove the environmental and attitudinal obstacles that prevent persons with disabilities from enjoying their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Let us work together for the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in an inclusive and sustainable world that embraces humanity in all its diversity.

(Source: [UNIC](http://unic.org))

## Oncology nurse diagnosed with cancer writes apology letter to patients: 'I'm sorry, I didn't get it'

Oncology nurse Lindsay Norris never imagined she'd be told the three words she had said to dozens of patients before: You have cancer.

In a blog post published on Nov. 14, titled 'Dear every cancer patient I ever took care of, I'm sorry. I didn't get it,' Norris, 33, who was diagnosed with stage III colorectal adenocarcinoma in September, apologized to every patient she's treated since she went into nursing.

"I didn't get what it felt like to actually hear the words," Norris, from Olathe, Kansas, wrote in the post. "That day was the worst. I'm sorry. I didn't get it...I didn't get how hard the waiting is...I didn't get how awkward it was to tell other people the news...I didn't get how much you hung on to every word I said to you."

Since her diagnosis, the mother of a 3-year-old son and 7-month-old daughter has continued to work. And every

night, without fail, she and her husband Camden try to keep things "as normal as possible" with their children and have dinner followed by bath time, story time and bed.

Norris is currently receiving radiation and chemotherapy tablets daily and will get a scan after Christmas to see how it's affected the cancer. She'll then undergo a permanent colostomy followed by four to six months of additional chemotherapy.

"We're just in the beginning stages," she tells PEOPLE. "But we're hoping for the best and for many years to come."

"I finally knew it was actually felt like to be told you have to cancer," she adds. "I felt like I was more understanding of how it felt to go through the process."

Norris says she wrote the blog post because she wanted to speak out to all of her patients, letting them know she now understands what they've gone through.

"I used to tell you that cancer will be just a phase in

your life. Just like high school or something — it seems like it drags on and on when you're in it, but soon it'll all be a memory. I'm sorry if this made you feel marginalized — it is not a phase," part of the letter reads.

"Yes, there are phases — the treatment won't last forever, but you are changed now," she continues. "The worrying won't stop, the uncertainty won't stop, the fear of recurrence or an awful end won't stop. I hear that gets better-time will tell. And time is precious. I'm sorry. I didn't get it."

Cancer patients at the hospital where she works have wanted to meet her and fellow nurses have told her to let them know if they're not being as sensitive as possible.

"I felt like I was immediately more careful with my words," she says. "I now know how it feels to go through the process. The response has been very heartwarming. It's overwhelming."

(Source: [yahoo](http://yahoo.com))

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## Ambassador hails growing Iran-Russia tourism ties

**IT TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Tehran's ambassador to Moscow said on Friday that Iran-Russia interactions in the tourism sector has led to a sharp rise in the number of visits to the two countries over the last two years, IRNA reported.

"Iranian tourists now, apart from Moscow, visit other Russian cities such as Saint Petersburg and Sochi," Mehdi Sanaei said during an interview with Russian radio broadcaster Vesti FM.



Iran's Ambassador to Russia Mehdi Sanaei (R) speaks in an interview with Russian radio broadcaster Vesti FM on December 2, 2016.

Iran with abundant attractions and proper accessibility between its key tourism destinations such as the cities of Isfahan and Shiraz, and the Persian Gulf island of Kish has been visited by ever-growing Russian travelers as well, the ambassador explained.

Expressing satisfaction with the current level of bilateral ties, the ambassador said relations between the two countries can gather pace in the light of better planning.

Earlier in November some sources reported that the two countries have come to an agreement to waive visas for certain tour groups of 5 to 50 people for up to 15 days. The deal is expected to come into effect by 2017.

"Based on the new agreement tour groups of 5 to 50 people heading to Russia from Iran or vice versa will be granted a visa-free stay of up to 15 days," Sputnik reported on November 27.

Maya Lomidze, executive director of the Association of Tour Operators of Russia, told Sputnik that the visa agreement may significantly surge the tourist flows between the two countries, just like it happened when a similar deal was signed between Russia and China.

The flow of Iranian tourists to Russia increased by 50-70 percent following the operation of direct flights that connects Iran to St. Petersburg, Moscow and Sochi, Lomidze said.

Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization has said the easing of visa rules would fertile the ground for the return of foreign tourists to Iran.

## Iceland recovers, and Reykjavik becomes a hive of development

**REYKJAVIK, Iceland (The New York Times)** — Set against a vista of sea and mountains, the city's modern concert hall and convention center, with its kaleidoscopic facade of multicolored glass, averages more than 140,000 visitors each month.

The thriving complex, which hosts fans of Bjork and enthusiasts of yo-yoing, is a symbol of how the country has recovered from the economic crisis, aided by tourists, whose appreciation for Iceland and whose influx of cash are further helping to spur development.

Outside the center, construction vehicles hum, working on a project that will join the event space downtown with the heart of this capital city's center, where restaurants and shopping abound.

It is one of several projects in a nearly 680,000-square-foot mixed-use development known as the Harpa plot, or Austurhofn, meaning East Harbor. This vast area has been decades in the making and is an attempt to transform the neighborhood into a live-work-play area.

"This has been a big black hole since 2008," said the Icelandic architect Asgeir Asgeirsson. "But now we are helping bring new life to downtown."

Construction of the Harpa concert hall and convention center in Reykjavik began in 2007, but screeched to a halt as Iceland's economy faltered during the global financial crisis.

In 2011, the complex finally opened. A regular comedy routine performed there teaches "How to Become Icelandic in 60 Minutes." And next summer, the International Yo-Yo Federation will host its annual competition at the site.

Mr. Asgeirsson, with his architectural firm Tark, is now helping to better link Harpa with Reykjavik's historic downtown, less than half a mile southeast, where places like Café Loki draw visitors for Icelandic delicacies, including dried fish and sheep's head jelly. Long lines form at the city's many hot dog stands, which sell the beloved lamb-based Icelandic dog topped with sauces and fried onions. Clothing stores sell a range of gear to handle the island's quick-changing weather, like traditional Nordic sweaters made from local wool.

The new project, which Tark and Mr. Asgeirsson are helping design, will include more than 355,000 square feet of retail and apartments, and a hotel. The upscale Edition hotel is owned and developed by the Boston-based Carpenter & Company, with the design partner Ian Schrager, and will be managed by Marriott.

Riding on Iceland's recovery, the development of the rest of East Harbor is finally moving ahead. The turnaround is a relief for the country, whose three major banks went under in quick succession and whose currency, the krona, tumbled in the global downturn. Shortly after, the government issued capital controls to prevent money from leaving Iceland and further devaluation of the krona.

# Noruz, traditional flatbread on UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list

**IT HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — The celebration of Noruz and the practice of flatbread making as common traditions native to Iran and some of its neighboring countries have been inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO.

The new entries were given the thumbs up during the 11th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which was held from November 28 to December 2 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

### Flatbreads carry genuine social functions

UNESCO comments that making flatbread as a widely-practiced tradition in Iran, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey carries several genuine social functions and interactions.

"Making flatbread (that are named lavash, katyrma, jupka or yufka) involves at least three people, often family members, with each having a role in its preparation and baking."

Lavash, a popular Iranian flatbread, can be made with very few ingredients namely flour, water, and salt. The dough is rolled flat before it smacked against the hot walls of a clay kiln.



A local Iranian band performs before a colorful Noruz spread to celebrate Persian new year in an undated photo.

### Noruz heralds arrival of spring

Noruz, which usually falls on March 21st every year, marks the beginning of spring across a vast geographical area encircling Iran.



Iranian women collaborating to bake loaves of indigenous flatbread in Kesheh village, Isfahan Province, March 2016.

It has been registered as a common tradition practicing in Iran, Azerbaijan, India, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Iraq.

Noruz was initially registered on the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009, as a common tradition for Iran, Azerbaijan, India, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkey, and Uzbekistan.

However, the five other countries put in requests officially to be added to the list during a meeting held in Tehran in January 2014.

## Indonesia Oct. foreign tourist arrivals up 15.6% y/y

Indonesia attracted 913,589 foreign tourists in October, up 15.62 percent from a year earlier, the statistics bureau said on Thursday.

That compares with growth in foreign tourist arrivals of 12.11 percent in September.

The total number of visitors in October, including

those passing through Indonesia's borders from neighboring countries and foreign workers with permits for less than one year, was 1.04 million, up 18.55 percent from a year earlier.

The government wants to expand tourism to help reduce the economy's reliance on selling raw commod-

ities. It aims to attract 20 million visitors a year by 2019, more than double last year's number.

In the first 10 months of 2016, the number of foreign visitors coming into Indonesia was 9.4 million people.

(Source: Reuters)

## Mexico archaeologists find temple to wind god beneath supermarket

Archaeologists working in Mexico City have uncovered a circular temple built more than 650 years ago to worship a god of wind.

It was excavated at a site discovered two years ago when a mid-20th-century supermarket was demolished. The circular platform, about 36ft in diameter and 4ft tall, now sits in the shadow of a shopping mall under construction.

The site is believed to have been built to worship the god of wind, Ehecatl-Quetzalcoatl, and the plans are to preserve it and make it visible to the public with a large viewing window.

What archaeologists initially found be-

low the old supermarket shards of pottery and human remains was expected, said Pedro Francisco Sánchez Nava, national archaeology coordinator for Mexico's National Anthropology and History Institute.

But deeper down they were surprised to find the temple, which offers another example of how the Mexica-Tlatelolca people worshipped one of their principal deities, Sánchez said. Offerings found included an infant with no signs of trauma, bird bones, obsidian, maguey cactus spines and ceramic figurines of monkeys and duck bills.

The majority of the temple's original

white stucco remains intact. Archaeologist Salvador Guillerm said similar structures, round on three sides and with a rectangular platform on the fourth, have been found before, including in the same area.

The temple lies within the perimeter of a large ceremonial site in the capital's Tlatelolco neighborhood, though much of that perimeter is invisible, covered by an urban landscape.

Eduardo Matos Moctezuma, researcher emeritus, said modern-day Mexico City covers several different pre-Hispanic cities, including Tlatelolco and its rival Tenochtitlan.

Tenochtitlan was a center of political

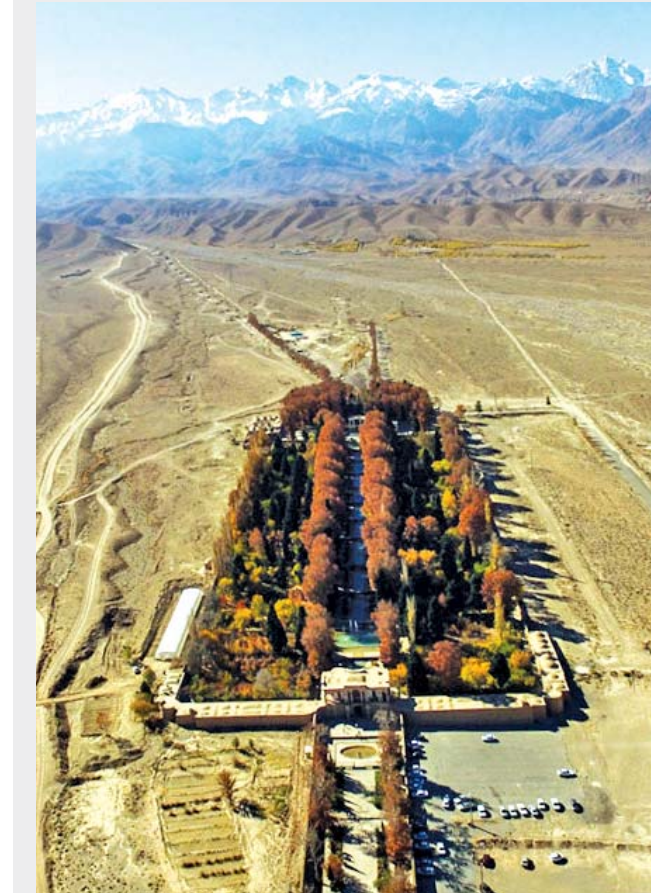
power while Tlatelolco dedicated itself to commerce, with an important market that was noted even by the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortes. Eventually Tenochtitlan took control of Tlatelolco.

When the Spanish and their indigenous allies began conquering Tenochtitlan, residents of that city withdrew to Tlatelolco to continue the fight and Tlatelolco became the last site of resistance against the Spanish in the area.

The site of the recently uncovered temple is just yards away from where Mexican soldiers massacred protesting students in 1968.

(Source: The Guardian)

**IN FOCUS** Tehran Times/Mohsen Rajabpur



## Historical Shazdeh Garden, full of fall colors

**IT HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — A photo collection depicts scenes of the well-preserved Shazdeh Garden in southeastern Iran on December 2, 2016.

The rectangular garden, spanning around 5.5 hectares, provides its visitors with delightful yet greenish peace and quiet though it is situated on margins of the central Iranian desert.

Sprawled in Mahan, a city in Kerman Province, the garden was founded by Abdolhamid-Mirza Farmanfarma, the then governor of Kerman in the late Qajar era (1785 to 1925). It also embraces a two-floor residential structure at the upper end.

UNESCO describes the Persian Garden an idea that combines natural elements with manmade components in a bid to materialize the concept of Eden or Paradise on Earth.





# Sleep deprivation puts strain on heart: study

Just one night of sleep deprivation is enough to cause strain on the heart - forcing it to work around 10 percent harder the next day, a new study has shown.

People who work in fire and emergency medical services and other high-stress jobs are often called upon to work 24-hour shifts with little opportunity for sleep.

While it is known that extreme fatigue can affect many physical, cognitive and emotional processes, it is the first study to examine how working a 24-hour shift specifically affects heart function.

"For the first time, we have shown that short-term sleep deprivation in the context of 24-hour shifts can lead to a significant increase in cardiac contractility, blood pressure and heart rate," said study author Dr. Daniel Kuetting, of the University of Bonn in Bonn, Germany.

## ■ Healthy radiologists

For the study, 20 healthy radiologists, including 19 men and one woman, with a mean age of 31.6 years were recruited and their hearts checked before and after a 24 hour shift, with an average of three hours of sleep.

The researchers measured the strain on the heart as well as blood pressure and heart rate.

Following sleep deprivation the participants showed significant increases in



the strain on their hearts, with the organ having to work around 10 per cent harder than usual. The participants also had significant increases in levels of thyroid

stimulating hormone and cortisol, a hormone released by the body in response to stress.

The "study was designed to investi-

**"As people continue to work longer hours or work at more than one job to make ends meet, it is critical to investigate the detrimental effects of too much work and not enough sleep."**

gate real-life work-related sleep deprivation," added Dr. Kuetting.

"As people continue to work longer hours or work at more than one job to make ends meet, it is critical to investigate the detrimental effects of too much work and not enough sleep."

## ■ Pilot study

Dr. Kuetting said the results of this pilot study, which were presented at the annual meeting of the Radiological Society of North America are transferable to other professions in which long periods of work are common.

In the past lack of sleep has been linked with factors such as disrupted metabolism and raised levels of cortisol, all of which may lead to higher blood pressure and increased stroke risk.

In 2010 a major study by the University of Warwick found that people who slept for less than six hours each night were 12 percent more likely to die prematurely - before the age of 65 - than those who slept the recommended six to eight hours a night.

In two situations where subjects forgot information over the course of 12 hours of being awake, after a night's sleep they were about twice as likely to be able to remember it, the University of Exeter study found.

(Source: The Telegraph)

## News report on global temperatures is wrong, scientists say

Scientists on Friday debunked a widely circulated news media report suggesting that recent record-high global temperatures were unrelated to climate change.

The report, which first appeared in the British tabloid The Daily Mail and was summarized in Breitbart News, the right-wing opinion and news site, cited incomplete data and drew incorrect conclusions, the scientists said.

Federal and international agencies have said that 2016 will likely be the hottest year on record, eclipsing the record set last year. In its report, The Daily Mail cited a recent decline in temperatures over land since the weather phenomenon known as El Niño ended this year, and said that El Niño, and not climate change, was responsible for the record heat.

## ■ Record warmth

But scientists said that while the recent El Niño did contribute to the record warmth, climate change played a major role, too.

"Nobody said the record temperatures were exclusively the result of climate change," said Mike Halpert, the deputy director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Prediction Center.

Deke Arndt, the chief of the climate monitoring branch at the NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information, said that the long-term warming trend

was quite clear, and that the impact of El Niño was in addition to what were already higher temperatures. "You can have both climate change and a goose from El Niño," he said.

Interactive chart showing high and low temperatures and precipitation for 3,116 cities around the world.

In an El Niño, water temperatures increase in the eastern equatorial Pacific, affecting air temperatures and weather worldwide. Sea surface temperatures have declined since their peak earlier this year, and now the opposite condition — La Niña, with water temperatures lower than normal — prevails.

Scientists are not surprised that some global temperatures are falling and expect that temperatures next year will be below those of the past two years because of La Niña. "But it's still likely to be quite a bit warmer than average," Mr. Halpert said.

## ■ Temperatures over land

Scientists said the news media reports were also faulty in that they cited only temperatures over land, which account for about 30 percent of the Earth's surface. Temperatures over land are much more variable than those over water because land stores relatively little heat.

"If you're going to be making global-scale assessments," Dr. Arndt said, "you need to be looking at glob-



al-scale data."

Global data show a slower decline in temperatures than land-only data, scientists said.

The House Committee on Science, Space and Technology posted about the Breitbart News report on Twitter on Thursday. The committee's Republican chairman, Representative Lamar Smith of Texas, has accused the Obama administration of having a "suspect climate agenda."

(Source: The NYT)

## Admiring the beauty of Venus with mobile astronomy apps

Venus, our beautiful but inhospitable neighboring planet, outshines everything in the sky but the sun and the moon. It is in the midst of a lengthy evening appearance that will last until March 2017.

Over the next few weeks, it will swing further from the sun, reaching greatest eastern elongation at the outer tip of its orbit, on Jan. 12. As the winter evening ecliptic tilts higher, it will raise the planet, making it optimal for viewing in a small telescope.

From now through the end of winter, the eye-catching planet Venus will shine brilliantly in the western evening sky. It's been hugging the horizon for months, but the turn of the seasons will soon lift it higher, to an ideal observing location even in a small telescope. Venus' orbit

between the Earth and the sun creates a number of interesting phenomena in the way it looks and moves.

## ■ Mobile Stargazing

In this edition of Mobile Stargazing, we'll look at Venus' properties using planetary apps, explain the motion of the planet through the sky, and provide some tips for observing and photographing the "Evening Star."

In many respects, Venus is Earth's sister planet. Its radius is only 5 percent smaller than Earth's, and it's 18 percent less massive than our planet. Its mean distance from the sun is 0.723 astronomical units (AU), or about three-quarters the mean Earth-sun distance — putting it slightly inside the habitable zone for our sun, where liquid water can exist on a

planet's surface. Venus has an average density that's similar to Earth's, so scientists think it is made of similar silicate rocks and minerals.

The Solar Walk app focuses on the planets and moons of our Solar System. It includes 3D-rendered globes with feature labels, cutaways showing internal global structure, exploration mission lander and orbiter positions, and an extensive gallery of images, including the Venus Messenger mission 3D terrains.

## ■ Solar System

The Solar Walk app focuses on the planets and moons of our Solar System. It includes 3D-rendered globes with feature labels, cutaways showing internal global structure, exploration mission lander and orbiter positions, and an extensive gallery of images, including the Venus Messen-

ger mission 3D terrains.

The angular momentum left over from the formation of the solar system causes all the planets to orbit the sun counterclockwise, as viewed from above, while rotating on their axes.

The Earth's axial tilt of 23.44 degrees gives us our seasons. Mars, Saturn and Neptune have comparable tilts. But something bizarre has happened to Venus; its axis is tilted by a whopping 177 degrees, meaning that its north pole points almost south so that it now rotates "backward" or retrograde.

Planetary-formation experts believe that early in the solar system's history, a massive object knocked Venus "head over heels."

(Source: space.com)

## Scientists record biggest ever coral die-off on Australia's Great Barrier Reef

Warm seas around Australia's Great Barrier Reef have killed two-thirds of a 700-km (435 miles) stretch of coral in the past nine months, the worst die-off ever recorded on the World Heritage site, scientists who surveyed the reef said on Tuesday.

Their finding of the die-off in the reef's north is a major blow for tourism at reef which, according to a 2013 Deloitte Access Economics report, attracts about A\$5.2 billion (\$3.9 billion) in spending each year.

The "coral is essentially cooked," Professor Andrew Baird, a researcher at James Cook University who was part of the reef surveys, told Reuters by telephone from Townsville in Australia's tropical north.

He said the die-off was "almost certainly" the largest ever recorded anywhere because of the size of the Barrier Reef, which at 348,000 sq km (134,400 sq miles) is the biggest coral reef in the world.

A man snorkels in an area called the 'Coral Gardens' near Lady Elliot Island, on the Great Barrier Reef, north-east of Bundaberg town in Queensland, Australia, June 11, 2015.

## ■ Living algae

Bleaching occurs when the water is too warm, forcing coral to expel living algae and causing it to calcify



and turn white. Mildly bleached coral can recover if the temperature drops and the survey found this occurred in southern parts of the reef, where coral mortality was much lower.

While bleaching occurs naturally, scientists are concerned that rising sea temperatures caused by global warming magnifies the damage, leaving sensitive underwater ecosystems unable to recover.

## ■ Great Barrier Reef

UNESCO's World Heritage Committee stopped

## Indian startup plans mission to land on the moon in 2018

An Indian startup is planning to launch a mission to land on the moon at the end of January 2018 which, if successful, would make India the fourth nation to land there after the U.S., Russia and China. It would also be the first time a privately-held company has placed a spacecraft on the moon's surface.

Axiom Research Labs' Team Indus, which is made up of former scientists from the Indian Space Research Organization, is competing in Google's Lunar XPrize challenge, the Wall Street Journal reports. The Lunar XPrize is an unprecedented competition to challenge and inspire global engineers, entrepreneurs and innovators to develop low-cost methods of robotic space exploration.

To win the first place \$20 million prize, privately funded teams must successfully place a spacecraft on the moon's surface, travel at least 500 meters and transmit high-definition video and images back to Earth. The second place finisher gets \$5 million; incentive bonuses totaling another \$5 million are available for such achievements as surviving a lunar night (which lasts 14 Earth days) and visiting an Apollo landing site.

As well as Team Indus, Israel's SpaceIL, the U.S.' Moon Express and an international team called Synergy Moon have signed up to compete. Sixteen teams in total want to make the 238,900-mile trip but many are still in the fundraising process. All of the finalists are required to have a verified launch contract in hand by Dec. 31 2016 to remain in the running.

The co-founder and director of the Bangalore-based startup says the mission will cost \$60 million and around \$15 million has been raised so far through private equity. The rest of the money is expected to come from sponsorship, donations and grants, as well as charging companies or universities to put their instruments on board to collect data.

(Source: Time)

## Smart sensor can tell you exactly which devices are wasting power in your home

Whether it's for money-saving purposes or just good old-fashioned curiosity, it would be great to have a gadget able to tell us the precise amount of electricity that's used by our everyday household appliances, light fixtures, and other devices.

Well, thank your lucky stars for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Office of Naval Research, then, because researchers from both establishments have just designed such a portable, low-cost smart sensor.

The portable sensor system is comprised of five postage stamp-sized sensors, which can be placed over the incoming power lines in a house. The self-calibrating system is then able to rapidly sample data, pinpoint the strongest electrical signals, and figure out each appliance, light fixture and so on based on the amount of power that it uses.

It then channels the data to an app capable of telling users when, for instance, their refrigerator goes into a defrost cycle, or at what point their water heater switches off and on.

"There are already ways to monitor household energy use, but they involve hiring a licensed electrician or cutting through power lines or pipes to attach expensive specialized equipment," MIT Professor of Electrical Engineering Steven Leeb said in a statement. "With our system, you can install non-contact sensors using zip ties or even velcro, and use signal processing to measure power consumption. It's fast, easy and much less expensive. It also could serve as a way to tell when equipment needs maintenance or replacement."

How cheap? The researchers think that, developed into a commercial product, such a system could cost \$25 to \$30 per home.

Of course, given the Office of Naval Research funding, it's also got potential military applications. As one example, it could help save on fuel and power consumption in Navy vessels, thereby allowing them to sail further before needing to be refueled.

(Source: Digital Trends)

## How top swimmers can go faster: It's all in the fingers

The best way for competitive swimmers to hold their fingers is to spread them slightly apart so they rake the water, a new study finds.

In the hunt for the technique that could bring the fastest freestyle swimming, previous research hinted that swimmers could improve their efficiency by spreading their fingers apart, but much remained uncertain how this might work and how much swimmers needed to spread their fingers to benefit.

To solve this mystery, fluid dynamicists investigated both virtual models of human arms in computer simulations and 3D-printed models of human arms in wind-tunnel experiments. They analyzed the forces that these models experienced at five different levels of finger spreading: At zero degrees of spread, where all the fingers were pressed together like a paddle, through progressively wider 5-degree intervals all the way to 20 degrees of spread.

The best results were seen with 10-degree finger spreading in both computer simulations and wind-tunnel experiments, the researchers said.

(Source: Live Science)



## Basel and Stockholm Convention Regional Center renews establishment in Iran

By Maryam Qarehgozlou

**TEHRAN** — Basel and Stockholm Convention Regional Center, an institution aiming at protecting human health and the environment against the adverse effects of hazardous wastes, extended its establishment in Iran for five more years until 2020.

Over a ceremony held on Saturday in Tehran the Secretary of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, Rolph Payet, and the Department of Environment deputy director Saeed Motesaddi inked an agreement on continuation of Basel and Stockholm Convention Regional Center establishment in Iran.

Basel and Stockholm Convention Regional Center was first opened in Iran some 15 years ago with the purpose of controlling trans-boundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal in Tehran, DOE director for international affairs and conventions Majid Shafipour said.

“There are only six regional centers worldwide one of which is in Iran and now by renewing the agreement we are trying to promote our activities by encouraging other countries of western Asia to join us,” he added.

He further explained that countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Iraq and Bhutan are of the centers’ members.

Payet, for his part, lauded Iran’s active role in fulfilling its commitments to the conventions.

He further highlighted that as economic sector is growing in Western Asia integrated management of hazardous waste are becoming of overriding importance, adding “sharing what we have in terms of both sustainable development and economic growth and make sure the pollution does not get passed on the future generation and create a sustainable future is also crucial.

He finally encouraged the center to go beyond the Basel Convention as he believes there is great potential among academics and industries in Iran to go beyond what the convention simply dictates and try to engage all people in the context of sustainable development goals.

The Basel Convention on the Control of Trans-boundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal was adopted on March 22, 1989 by the Conference of Plenipotentiaries in Basel, Switzerland, in response to a public outcry following the discovery, in the 1980s, in Africa and other parts of the developing world of deposits of toxic wastes imported from abroad.

The regional centers focus on training and technology transfer regarding the management of hazardous and other wastes and the minimization of their generation.

## LEARN ENGLISH

### Dealing with a Mass Transit Strike

Marge: Where have you been? You should have been home over two hours ago!

Homer: I've been trying to get home. Haven't you been watching the news? The transportation workers union has voted to **strike**. There was a **mass walkout** at 4:30 p.m. today.

Marge: You're kidding! I didn't know anything about it. They **walked off the job** right before the afternoon **commute**?

Homer: Yeah, I think it was **calculated** to make the biggest **impact** so that **the powers that be** will **sit up and take notice**.

Marge: You mean the walkout has **halted** services on all public transportation – all buses, trains, and subways?

Homer: Yes, that's right. Everything is at a **standstill**. There are a lot of **disgruntled** commuters out there.

Marge: When will services be **restored**?

Homer: I have no idea. I imagine things won't get back to normal before tomorrow morning's commute.

Marge: So what are you going to do?

Homer: I might have to stay home from work. I'm **stranded** with no **mass transit** services.

Marge: Oh, **that's a shame**.

Homer: Isn't it, though?

(Source: eslpod.com)

#### ■ Words & phrases:

**strike:** a period of time when a group of workers deliberately stop working because of a disagreement about pay, working conditions etc.

**mass:** involving or intended for a very large number of people

**walkout:** an occasion when people stop working or leave a meeting as a protest

**walk off the job:** to stop working as a protest

**commute:** the journey to work every day

**calculate:** to be intended to have a particular effect

**impact:** the effect or influence that an event, situation etc. has on someone or something

**the powers that be:** the unknown people who have important positions of authority and power, and whose decisions affect your life

**sit up and take notice:** to suddenly start paying attention to someone, because they have done something surprising or impressive

**halt:** to stop moving

**standstill:** a situation in which there is no movement or activity at all

**disgruntled:** annoyed or disappointed, especially because things have not happened in the way that you wanted

**restore:** to make something return to its former state or condition

**stranded:** a person or vehicle that is stranded is unable to move from the place where they are; stuck

**mass transit:** methods of transport by which large numbers of people can travel around a city

**that's a shame:** used when you wish a situation was different, and you feel sad or disappointed



© Tehran Times/ Asghar Khamseh

## December 4 marking Intl. Cheetah Day: World’s fastest land animal is racing against extinction

By Farnaz Heidari

Cheetah is world's fastest land animal over short distances and also the most ancient of all the big cats. Years of persecution have made it one of the world's most vulnerable big cats.

As Amy-Jane Beer and Pat Morris mentioned in Encyclopedia of Endangered animals, cheetahs probably evolved on the plains of the Middle East million years ago. Fossil evidence shows that 10,000 years ago cheetahs roamed in places as far apart as North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. The cheetah's heyday lasted until the last ice age, since then human populations have exploded and their range and numbers have shrunk.

In their ancestral homeland of the Middle East the Asian subspecies of cheetah is critically endangered, with very few, if any, individuals left in remote parts of Iran. The situation is only slightly better in Africa.

Definitive habitats of Cheetahs in Iran consist of Touran Protected Area in Semnan Province, Kavir National Park which is also in Semnan Province, Nayband Wildlife Refuge in South Khorasan Province, Miandasht Wildlife Refuge in North Khorasan Province, Abbasabad Naein Wildlife Refuge in Isfahan Province, Darband Ravar Wildlife Refuge in Kerman Province, Dare-Anjir Wildlife Refuge, Siah-koh Ardakan National Park, Kalmand and Bahadoran Protected Area and Bagfh Protected Area in Yazd Province.

On the occasion of the International Cheetah Day, December 4, the Tehran Times conducted an interview with Human Jowkar, director of Conservation of Asiatic Cheetah Project (CACP) and Dr. Iman Memarian, the chief veterinarian of Pardisan Rehabilitation Center.

#### ■ Asiatic Cheetah conflicts in Iran

“Asiatic Cheetah as a subspecies experienced bottleneck and a sharp reduction

in population size and we know when a species is driven to extinction, it is usually by a combination of factors acting simultaneously or consecutively,” Jowkar explained.

Habitat loss and fragmentation among with specific group of threats such as over grazing and presence of livestock guardian dogs are considered as main threats for Asiatic Cheetah in Iran, Jowkar said, adding, it is difficult to clearly tell the number of Asiatic Cheetahs in the country because it is proven that estimating animal density by using camera traps have many shortcomings due to low detectability.

“We have many reports not just from Iran but also from Africa which indicate that surveying rare and sparse species like cheetah systematically covers wider scope of activity of the males than females and that's why the number of females are small in our most camera trap surveys,” he highlighted.

“Therefore, currently we are trying to use genetic footprint method beside camera trap studies,” he added.

“As reduction of genetic variation has an important effect on survival of Asiatic cheetah we are going to examine genetic depletion which is correlated with problems such as elevated juvenile mortality, extreme abnormalities in sperm development, difficulties of captive breeding, and increased vulnerability to infectious disease outbreaks,” Jowkar pointed.

#### ■ The costs of losing cheetahs in Iran

Jowkar further underscores the key role wildlife can play in reviving tourism industry regretting that Cheetahs' habitats cover 6 million hectares of lands and are overlooked same as many other tourism potentials in the country due to oil availability.

Despite their stunning features the tourism potentials of such habitats are ignored, he added, stating, market and non-market values of cheetah's habitats

are why we are trying to conserve these species, he noted.

For example, Jowkar said, the Hircanian forests are of great non-market value to the people as they guarantee downstream cities by making big barrier on the way of flood; similarly cheetahs' habitats play a significant role in pasture management.

Pasture management in cheetahs' habitats goes back to 15 years ago, Jowkar said, explaining, the significance of pasture management are more evident in regions such Sabzevar and Nishapur which are likely to turn into hotspots for dust and sand storms.

In fact, he added, the fertility of many agricultural fields and also industrial development depend on pasture management and land use control which all result from conservation activities of Asiatic cheetah.

He further lamented the fact that the extinction of Cheetahs is the result of carelessness and lack of regional and intensive management which accordingly lead to pasture destruction and ultimately bring about deleterious effects not just upon the ecosystems but also people's livelihood.

#### ■ Asiatic cheetah's breeding in captivity

The chief veterinarian of Pardisan Rehabilitation Center Memarian said “about 2 years ago, Delbar, a female cheetah, from Touran National Park and Kushki, a male cheetah, from Miandasht Wildlife Refuge were transferred to Tehran.”

Asiatic Cheetah research site in Pardisan Park, Tehran, was designed at that time to raise awareness of the plight of the cheetah and to campaign for its survival, Memarian said, adding, consulting with many experts leads to electing Pardisan over other options such as Kavir National Park, Khojir National Park or other existing sites [for breeding the two cheetahs in captivity].

“What we sought most was to monitor the two cheetahs and what we've achieved so far proves that we made the right decision,” he highlighted.

“The site is designed for more than two cheetahs, as we considered many assumptions such as taking care of hand-rear cubs from cheetah breeding facilities and raising them to be ambassadors for the other cheetahs who are taken from nature and kept in captivity in the same enclosure,” Memarian suggested.

Memarian further explained that the site is consisting of 6 separated parts, 2 of which are called introduction parts. Both cheetahs are spending most of their time in the introduction parts to mark territories, etc.

“We've done our best to make the site as similar as possible to the cheetah's natural habitats,” he pointed.

So far many researches has been done on African Cheetahs and these studies show that cheetah reproduction in captivity is a difficult task to accomplish, he lamented.

The Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute plays a leadership role in the management of the North American cheetah population, including through the governance of the Breeding Centers Coalition, a group of nine facilities cooperating to generate a self-sustaining population of this species, Memarian said, adding, their researches reveal that the success rate is less than 10 percent with more than one couple and it increases to 30 percent with more than 10 couples.

He went on to say that “it should be noted that there has never been any similar study on subspecies of Asiatic Cheetah and keep in mind that the reproduction of cheetahs in captivity cannot solve the challenge of extinction for Asiatic cheetahs; we are just trying to advance our knowledge in this case.”



## 53-pound snapping turtle saved from pipe

**HOUSTON (AP)** — A 53-pound snapping turtle is recovering at a Houston wildlife rehabilitation center after fire-rescue crews saved it from a drainage pipe.

The Houston Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals says the specimen, one of a threatened species known as alligator snapping turtles, was found wedged Tuesday in the pipe in a new residential development near Hockley, about 35 miles northwest of Houston.

Fire-rescue crews used a spreader to open the pipe enough to remove the turtle, which had struggled to keep its head above water. Several drowned alligator snapping turtles flowed from the newly unblocked pipe.

The SPCA said it also is rehabilitating one other alligator snapping turtle, which had an embedded fish hook and other serious wounds. Both will be returned to the wild after recovering.

### ENGLISH IN USE

#### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → چ

### Iran, Cyprus to boost health co-op

Iranian Health Minister Hassan Qazizadeh-Hashemi and his Cypriot counterpart George Pamboridis signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on Wednesday for an uplift in health cooperation, ISNA news agency reported.

The MOU is aiming at improving cooperation in various fields of healthcare, treatment, pharmaceuticals, training and research.

Cyprus can open up a perfect opportunity for Iran to enter the European market, Qazizadeh-Hashemi said, adding, “we hope that private sectors of the two countries would take up this suitable opportunity to their best advantage.”

### ENGLISH PROVERB

#### Rome wasn’t built in a day

■ **Explanation:** something that you say which means that it takes a long time to do an important job

■ **For example:** ‘Sometimes it feels like we've spent all our lives decorating this house.’ ‘Well, Rome wasn't built in a day.’

### PHRASAL VERB

#### Bring something about

■ **Meaning:** to make something happen; cause

■ **For example:** A huge amount of environmental damage has been brought about by the destruction of the rainforests.

### ENGLISH IDIOM

#### Badger someone

■ **Explanation:** if you badger someone into doing something, you persistently nag or pester them until you obtain what you want

■ **For example:** Sophie badgered her parents into buying her a new computer.

### گسترش همکاری‌های بهداشتی و درمانی بین ایران و قبرس

به گزارش خبرگزاری ایسنا حسن قاضی زاده هاشمی وزیر بهداشت و همتای قبرسی اش جرج پمبریدیس روز چهارشنبه تفاهم نامه ای در جهت گسترش همکاری های بهداشتی و درمانی امضا کردند.

این تفاهم نامه در جهت ارتقای همکاری های بهداشتی، درمانی، دارویی، آموزشی و پژوهشی به امضای طرفین رسیده است.

قاضی زاده هاشمی با اشاره به اینکه قبرس برای ایران می‌تواند فرصت مناسبی برای ورود به بازار اروپا باشد افزود: امیدواریم بخش خصوصی دو کشور، حداکثر استفاده را از این فرصت به وجود آمده ببرند.



# UN passes resolution calling on Israel to withdraw from Syria's Golan Heights

The United Nations General Assembly has once again passed a resolution calling on Israel to withdraw from Syria's Golan Heights, territory that the Tel Aviv regime has occupied since 1967.

The assembly adopted the resolution, which had been proposed by 37 countries, by an overwhelming majority on November 30.

The resolution also condemned Israel's non-compliance to the Security Council Resolution 497 since 1981 until now, describing as null and void Tel Aviv's decision issued on December 14, 1981 to impose its control over the occupied Golan Heights.

The UNGA also reemphasized the basic principle of inadmissibility of the acquisition of territories by force based on the international law and the UN Charter.

The resolution stressed that the Geneva Conventions on the pro-



tection of civilian individuals in time of war apply in the occupied Golan Heights.

Many of the states participating in the session also denounced the Israeli practices in the occupied re-

gion.

Israel seized the Golan Heights from Syria after the 1967 Six-Day War and later occupied it in a move that has never been recognized by the international community. The regime has built tens of illegal settlements in the area ever since and has used the region to carry out a number of military operations against the Syrian government.

Syria says Israel and its Western and regional allies are aiding Takfiri militant groups operating inside the Arab country. The Israeli regime has even set up field hospitals there to treat wounded Syrian militants.

The Syrian army has repeatedly seized huge quantities of Israeli-made weapons and advanced military equipment from the foreign-backed militants inside Syria.

(Source: Press TV)

## Syria now in control of 60% of east Aleppo: group

Syrian forces have retaken another district in the east of the city of Aleppo, now exerting control over 60 percent of the city's militant-held eastern part, according to a monitoring group.

Joined by allied fighters, the Syrian military seized Aleppo's Tariq al-Bab neighborhood from the militants, the UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said on Saturday.

The advance also restored control on a road leading from Aleppo's government-held western neighborhoods to the city's airport, which is also under government control.

Foreign-backed militants amassed in the city's eastern side in 2012. The government has been controlling its west and fighting to retake the east.

The official Syrian Arab News Agency said the military had also wrested back control over the Karam Al-Qatari, Jazmati, and Halwanayah neighborhoods in eastern Aleppo. An unspecified number of the militants were killed in the operations.

The government's advances have taken by surprise many of the foreign states that have been channeling financial and military support to the militants since the onset of the foreign-backed militancy in Syria in 2011.

Amid the victories, some countries, including France, have called for the implementation of a ceasefire in Aleppo, citing a need for secure corridors for the transfer of humanitarian assistance to the city.

On Wednesday, Russia warned that the issue of aid delivery in Syria was becoming highly politicized as most UN humanitarian aid was going to the areas occupied by foreign-backed militants. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said only one percent

of the UN aid supplies was being directed to the western city of Dayr al-Zawr, where at least 200,000 people trapped by the Takfiri Daesh terrorist group remain in desperate need of help.

Russia has, meanwhile, voiced outrage at the recent formation in Aleppo's east of a militant umbrella group calling itself the Army of Aleppo, describing it a diversion tactic to shield a notorious terrorist group there.

The move, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Friday, was just an attempt to disguise and shield al-Nusra Front, an affiliate of al-Qaeda that has recently renamed itself Jabhat Fateh al-Sham and has claimed to have broken up with al-Qaeda.

Lavrov said nearly all the militant groups fighting in eastern Aleppo were controlled by the Takfiri terrorist group.

"I do not rule out that this is just another attempt to rebrand al-Nusra Front and shield it from righteous retaliation," Lavrov said, referring to the formation of the so-called Army of Aleppo.

Also on Saturday, a unit grouping army forces and its allies destroyed the positions of al-Nusra, in the suburbs of the city of al-Rastan in the southwestern Syria Dara'a Province.

### ■ 'Formula' to avoid 'terrible battle' in Aleppo

The UN envoy for Syria said Saturday he hoped "some type of formula" could be found to avoid a "terrible battle" in Aleppo, where government forces and their allies are gaining ground in an attack aimed at taking back the whole city from rebels.

Staffan de Mistura, speaking at a Rome conference, indicated the battle for Aleppo would not last that much longer, saying "the fact is that Aleppo is not going to



stay that long."

"I was feeling it would be a terrible battle ending up by Christmas-New Year. I hope the battle will not take place, that there will be some type of formula," he said.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Saturday Moscow was ready for talks with the United States about a complete withdrawal of all rebels from Syria's eastern Aleppo.

Meanwhile, European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini is convinced the fall of rebel-held areas of Aleppo to the government would not end the war in Syria, she said Saturday.

"I'm convinced the fall of Aleppo will not end the war," Mogherini said during a panel discussion at a conference in Rome war with U.N. Syria envoy Staffan de Mistura.

(Source: agencies)

## OPEC success dependent on 'grand bargain' between Iran and S. Arabia: expert

➔ He gives an example why the agreement would not work.

"Recall a time in history when the Arab members of OPEC, or OAPEC, at the end of 1973 imposed an embargo to cut production to pressure the U.S. into changing its policy towards Israel, two countries cheated. Revolutionary Iraq, and yes Saudi Arabia that secretly sold oil to the U.S. fleet!"

He also disputes the view that the OPEC agreement was a victory for Iran, saying, "It looks a victory on paper, but in the medium and longer run will Saudi Arabia and the rest of the GCC maintain this level? I believe not."

Iran and Saudi Arabia are at serious odds over the conflicts in Syria, Yemen, and the popular pro-democracy protests by Shias in Bahrain.

Iran supports the Syrian government while Saudi Arabia backs militant groups that some of them are



aligned with extremist Salafi groups. Iran is also a vocal critic of the Saudi war on Yemen.

### ■ 'Political concessions'

The George Washington University professor says

the Arab members of OPEC stick to their quota only if they get "political concessions from Iran".

Oil producing Arab states want concessions from Iran "when it comes to Iran's relations with Iraq, Lebanon, Bahrain, Yemen, and maybe even Syria," he comments.

As a key OPEC member Iran has been seeking to regain its share of the oil market since the Western-led oil embargo against the country was lifted early this year under the July 2015 nuclear agreement.

"Saudi Arabia will not do anything that helps Iran," the international business expert notes.

However, he says, "Even if OPEC members do not uphold this agreement at all, still all OPEC members benefit from this so-called agreement because in the short run we will see a bounce in oil prices."

## A death-dealing journey for a better life

➔ Due to the lack of humanitarian aid, 3,000 children suffering with severe acute malnutrition in the area are at the risk of dying and 150,000 people are suspended from receiving food and medications.

Amid all these sufferings, Myanmar's de facto leader San Suu Kyi is being seriously criticized due to her silence and denying all the accusations against these ongoing crimes. When she came to power about a year ago, people hoped she would make some improvements and bring change in terms of human rights issues since she was considered a democracy icon and was herself a Nobel Peace Prize laureate. Even, the US administration eased the sanctions against Myanmar hoping that, among other achievements, the new government will focus on bringing "respect for human rights to its people." However, things exacerbated since she came to power and she didn't take any steps to stop this persecution.

Against all odds, these persecuted people flee their homelands with the hope of a better life. In the Rakhine state, they live in very harsh conditions and could hardly survive; for example,

they are not given a right to have a last name, to have citizenship, to perform their religious duties, to have the right to marry or to travel, or to go to school. When they make their way to the border, some of them even get shot by the Myanmar military while trying to cross the Naaf River tying Myanmar to the Bangladeshi border. As per Bangladeshi authorities, more than 2,000 are estimated to cross the border as a consequence of the increased oppression of the military.

Rohingyas start a death-dealing journey to freedom and they face a threat at every step they take. Most of them get injured or lost or get killed on the way to the border, some may get killed while crossing the border. Troubles do not end here since Bangladeshi officials have reinforced border patrols lately to intercept the entry of Rohingyas inside their frontiers. In fact, what we would expect and hope is for them to embrace and protect them as refugees since their return will most probably lead to their death.

When we take into consideration these facts, we realize that a very cruel system full of oppression operates in this

part of the world and people are watching this with anxious and fearful eyes. Regrettably, some people in the world have left behind their conscience and never think of others' lives or to be more frank they do not care at all as long as they can sustain a comfortable life. This is both very surprising and painful because they may one day be subject to the same fate. Mostly, they do not think they will ever be exposed to such a life. They continue to lack empathy and care for others unless they or their families experience some unexpected hardships and difficulties, or oppression. However, what makes us human is the moral conscience that God bestows upon us. Right and fair decisions can only be made with a sound, pure conscience based on the fear of God. All the people on earth are responsible for those who are oppressed even though the persecuted might be as far away as the other side of the world and that they probably may not even personally meet them even once in their lifetime. People are responsible both for the blessings they are given and the actions they leave behind as God reminds in the Qur'an: "What reason could you

have for not fighting in the Way of God – for those men, women and children who are oppressed?" (4:75)

As a consequence, when you see a news report in a newspaper concerning these oppressed people, do not turn the page with disregard. Keep in mind that what these poor people are going through is real. Think of what you can do, what solid steps you can take as even one conscientious and caring human being. Don't think that by being alone, you aren't able to bring change. Very good outcomes can be obtained even by only one individual. Whether you are a state official, a think tank fellow, a housewife or a student, there are always things you can do if you employ and follow your moral conscience. What matters most is to take action and do it without any delay. Whether it's one person or a small community, change can be made, and the impact can be tremendous. In a similar manner, state leaders may join with other countries' leaders and impose immediate sanctions on the Myanmar government and call a halt to this affront to humanity.

## Gambia president Jammeh quits after suffering election loss

Gambia's Yahya Jammeh said he'll step down after losing a presidential election on Thursday in a remarkable about-face that prompted thousands of Gambians to celebrate the departure from office of a leader who had vowed to rule for a billion years.

"Gambians have decided that I should take the back-seat," Jammeh said Friday on state television, hours after the election commission declared that opposition leader Adama Barrow, a virtual unknown six months ago, emerged as winner of the Dec. 1 poll. "You have voted for someone to lead our country. This is our country, and I wish you all the best."

Gambians took to the streets on Friday and celebrated the surprise outcome by brandishing flags and campaign posters as police patrolled in the capital, Banjul.

### ■ Democratic Party

Barrow took over as head of the United Democratic Party after its founder, Ousainou Darboe, was sentenced to three years in jail in July for organizing a rare protest march. Barrow, 51, was backed by seven other opposition parties.

Criticized by human rights groups for brutally stifling dissent, Jammeh got landslide victories in four previous polls.

Bellicose statements and claims of extraordinary powers were hallmarks of his leadership style, with Jammeh saying he could cure AIDS and infertility and proclaiming himself a doctor as well as a professor.

(Source: The Bloomberg)

## Russia, Iran to debunk West's media lies over Aleppo operation

➔ The Iranian expert emphasized that it had been largely neglected by the Western media that besides engaging in counter-terrorism operations on the ground Russia and Iran were taking every effort to save Syrian civilians.

Given the fact that Daesh (ISIS/ISIL), al-Nusra Front and other extremists used the Syrians as "human shields" it was extremely difficult to carry out these rescue operations, Ramzani-Bonesh admitted.

"However, now that Assad's army has made significant progress [in Aleppo] with the assistance of its allies and liberated large areas [of the city], it's time for Iran and Russia to strike back in response to the information war waged by Western and some Arabian mass media [against Russia and Iran] which falsely accused us of inaction and unwillingness to provide humanitarian aid to Syrian civilians," Ramzani-Bonesh pointed out, referring to the recent Russo-Iranian humanitarian initiative.

The Iranian expert highlighted that it is extremely important to save those Aleppo residents who are still being used by terrorists as "human shields" and ensure the safety of humanitarian convoys heading to Aleppo.

(Source: Sputnik)

## Terminating Iran's nuclear deal: What's at stake?

➔ Furthermore, this posturing by President-elect Trump would strengthen the hard-liners' hand in Tehran who have consistently questioned the sincerity of the United States in upholding the tenets of the deal. It would be extremely perilous to underestimate Iran's influence and its ability to deploy her assets effectively in the region. By the same token, Iranian officials should fulfill their end of bargaining as best as they can so that they would diminish any possibility of provocation by the United States. The U.S. Senate's recent vote (99 in favor and none opposed) to extend American sanctions against Iran until 2026 could alienate the reformist government of Hassan Rouhani and would likely push Tehran toward adopting more conservative—and even radical—measures in the region.

The fact of the matter is that short of going to war or a move to occupy the country, Iran's nuclear program can be held in check through diplomatic means. The recognition of this reality led the Obama administration to wisely pursue diplomacy with Iran. Any deviation from this path is likely to lead to more tensions in the region—a troubling possibility that would plunge the United States back into yet another unnecessary conflict in coming years. Alternatively, the two countries can collaborate when their interests overlap, particularly in their campaign against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), yet continue to reasonably compete when their interest may not coincide in other cases.

More paradoxically perhaps is the incoming administration's seemingly close relationship with Russia, who, under the regime of Vladimir Putin, unequivocally has voiced support for the continued diplomatic nature of engagement. If the United States is to proceed in the vein that Trump has called for, with closer coordination and perhaps a reset with Russia, harming a potentially close Russian ally would seem to make little sense and only exacerbate tension, while obstructing Trump's diplomatic movements more broadly. Much time was spent on the campaign trail demonizing the nuclear deal, so the bell may already have been rung, but it is more important than ever for the United States, the Middle East region, and the rest of the world, for the effects of positive diplomatic engagements to continue.

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## Crowning glory for Asian duo

THE DAY REPLAYED — Asian representatives Korea DPR and Japan had plenty of reason to celebrate on the final day of the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup Papua New Guinea 2016. Despite falling behind to France in the final, the North Koreans managed to turn a compelling match in their favour to become world champions for the second time since 2006. Meanwhile Japan emerged victorious over USA, securing another third-place finish after recording the same result in 2012.



Results  
Match for third place  
USA 0-1 Japan  
Final  
Korea DPR 3-1 France  
Goal of the day  
USA 0-1 Japan (Mami Ueno 87')

Despite firing 29 shots goalwards during the match for third place, the Japanese had to wait until the 87th minute before substitute Mami Ueno broke the deadlock and scored the winner. After picking

up the ball on the left side of the penalty area, the striker demonstrated excellent awareness and technical skill to loop a shot over Casey Murphy and into the far corner.

Despite putting in an exceptional shift between the posts, the American goalkeeper could do little but watch helplessly as the delicate lob floated beyond her reach. The strike also ensured that Ueno received the adidas Golden Boot as the tournament's top goalscorer.

### ■ Memorable moments

Between heaven and hell: Kim Phyong Hwa experienced every emotion football has to offer within the space of a few minutes. With the scores tied at 1-1, the unmarked Korea DPR midfielder missed a gilt-edged opportunity to give her team the lead from short range, before making amends with a headed goal just a few minutes later.

### ■ Geyoro's flash of genius

"I've got to take more shots," Grace Geyoro told FIFA.com ahead of the final. "Everyone tells me I should, but then I don't think of it later. Although I've got a good shot, the thought never crosses my mind during matches." In a moment of inspiration in the 17th minute of the final, the France midfielder finally tried her luck and put Les Bleuettes ahead.

### ■ Orange lights the way forward

The FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup ended today in Papua New Guinea with a strong message to end violence against women and girls. At the final, a campaign was highlighted to stop this pandemic, which affects 1 in 3 women and girls worldwide. Stadium screens illuminated with videos and messages to raise awareness. A culmination of FIFA's efforts throughout the tournament with its Red Card campaign to end violence, the pre-match ceremony was organized in collaboration with UN Women and part of the "Orange the World" initiative under the umbrella of the UN Secretary-General's UNITE to End Violence against Women campaign. The colour orange is used as a symbol of a brighter future, free from violence against women and girls.

Remembering Chapecoense: A minute's silence was held before both matches in tribute to the victims of Monday's tragic plane crash involving Brazilian club Associação Chapecoense de Futebol, while players from all four teams wore black armbands.

FAN-tastic atmosphere: Fans in Port Moresby were once again on top form for the final day of the U-20 Women's World Cup. Colourful supporters packed out the National Football Stadium and created an impressive atmosphere, while the Fan Zone at the Vision City Mega Mall was bursting at the seams as a vast crowd gathered in front of the big screen to noisily celebrate this festival of football.

A World Cup experience for all: In a fantastic gesture from US coach Michelle French, midfielder Marley Canales was brought on as a substitute in the final few minutes of the match for third place to ensure that all 18 outfield players in the American squad enjoyed time on the pitch in Papua New Guinea.

Hosts embark on lap of honour: Despite exiting the competition after the group stage, Papua New Guinea's performances sparked euphoria in their homeland that peaked when Nicollete Ageva scored their first-ever World Cup goal. On the final day of the competition, coach Lisa Cole's charges took the opportunity to round off their adventure with a lap of honour in front of appreciative fans at the National Football Stadium.

### ■ The stat

113 – A total of 113 goals were scored at Papua New Guinea 2016, making it the highest-scoring tournament in the history of the U-20 Women's World Cup together with Chile 2008.

### ■ The words

"We were very confident when we arrived here. We wanted to respond to the exportations of our families, friends and everybody in our country. We did and that makes me very proud."

### ■ Korea DPR midfielder, Kim Phyong Hwa

"It has been a fantastic tournament, and there has been a lot of lessons learnt for all the players on our team. We weren't able to leave PNG with a medal but everything we take away from this moment, whether it was the feeling of being defeated or the feeling that we were always in the game, will prove really valuable for them the future.

"To sum up the entire tournament for us, I would just use one word – passion. That is the identity of this team. We absolutely could have played better soccer, there is no doubt about that, and the players know that. But they fought for a medal until the very last second, and the almost got one."

### ■ USA coach, Michelle French

"This tournament has been a good experience for my players, especially this match. This tournament is a good learning curve for the players, even if things didn't quite turn out the way we wanted. It has been a good learning curve for the players and is good for Japanese football. In terms of the outcome, we were disappointed not to reach the final but at least we have a medal to take home."

### ■ Japan coach, Asako Takakura

(Source: FIFA)

# Del Bosque: Simeone is The Best



"I didn't think I'd have to vote this season, but it looks like I'm going to have to start giving it some thought," said Vicente del Bosque with a wry smile, reflecting on a task he is more than familiar with. During his time as Spain coach, in which he steered La Roja to glory at the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa™ and UEFA EURO 2012, Del Bosque cast his vote for the FIFA Awards on many occasions and was even named FIFA World Coach of the Year for Men's Football in 2012.

Having this year passed on the Roja baton to Julen Lopetegui and announced his retirement from coaching, Del Bosque had not been planning to offer his views for The Best FIFA Football Awards™. Even so, he did not hesitate to answer FIFA.com's call to speak about his favourites for the awards, his relationship with some of the nominees and the growth in popularity of the women's game, which is very much to the fore in this year's awards.

■ **FIFA.com: What things have you looked at when voting over these last few years? What criteria have you followed in making your choices?**

Vicente del Bosque: Usually, irrespective of the form and quality of the various players, and what they've achieved, the one you've liked most is obvious and so it's easy for you to say 'he's the best'.

■ **Was there a year when you found it especially hard to make up your mind?**

I've never fretted too much about it. I just did what I felt was right. When it was tight, I always picked whoever I thought was the best and that was that. It was maybe a bit tougher in those years when Spain triumphed in the EURO and the World Cup, when they won three tournaments back-to-back. We did feel then that a Spanish player might be named the best.

They were all unlucky, or lucky depending on how you see it, to be around at the same time as the players who have deservedly scooped all the best player awards. That said, it is true that they [the Spaniards] would have been fitting winners, not least as standard-bearers for a [golden] generation and, above all, because of the collective success they embodied, since football is a collective sport.

■ **There are two Spanish players among this year's 23 nominees for The Best FIFA Men's Player: Andres Iniesta and Sergio Ramos. Do you think there should have been more?**

Perhaps. I think a couple more could

have made the list. Sergio Busquets, for example, or Gerard Pique... They are players who have also left their mark on a great period for Spanish football.

■ **Who do you think is the favourite to win the award this year?**

Messi and Ronaldo have dominated it in recent times and I imagine that people will decide between the two based on allegiances to the shirts they wear. In my book, they've been the best.

■ **And who's your favourite for the Best FIFA Men's Coach award?**

I'd love for one of the Spanish nominees to win it, truly, but I'd lean towards [Diego] Simeone. I think that, beyond just this year, his track record over the last few years has been really impressive. He's given the team an identity, making it his team, and they've competed really well. I don't think I'd look further than him, though that's no slight on the rest of the nominees – I'd like to place on record that I hold them all in high regard.

■ **Luis Enrique and Zinedine Zidane are up for this year's Men's Coach award. You were in charge of both of them at Real Madrid. Did they strike you at the time as the type of players who would end up in coaching?**

It's not what I envisaged happening, but

it turns out that they're both proving to be great coaches. One thing that sticks out when I think about Luis Enrique is one of the times when I took charge [of Real Madrid] as a caretaker and I played him at left-back. This is something that he really wasn't fond of and we all agreed that it wasn't his ideal position, but he put in a really good shift and helped us out in a game in Bilbao; we won 5-0 there and he was one of the top performers – at left-back!

But he was so strong and talented, and so eager to be involved, particularly in attack, that he found the full-back role unfulfilling. Still, I'm sure that it was a good experience for him – he must have seen what it's like when the shoe is on the other foot now when he's fielded midfielders at right-back, for example, when they'd prefer to play somewhere else. As for Zidane, it's true that he didn't seem to me to be overly keen on becoming a coach, but his results demonstrate that he's an excellent one.

■ **What were their virtues as players and what do you think they have to offer as coaches now?**

They were both extremely good players. They were fantastic in every respect, from their physical attributes to

their ability and enthusiasm for the game. They had a strong competitive streak, as well as boasting vast natural talent.

I can't judge them as coaches because I don't know what they're like. You've got to experience it for yourself, be face-to-face with them and see how they operate in the dressing room. Until you've seen that, you can't venture an opinion, I'd be seriously mistaken if I did so. What I can say is that they have different demeanours when you see them on TV, but they're both doing a great job.

■ **One of the features of these awards is that they give equal recognition to men's and women's football. What's your take on the development of the women's game in the last few years?**

I think there have been big strides made everywhere. Where development and training are concerned, the coaches who work in women's football are just as qualified as their counterparts in men's football. I think some fantastic progress has been made and we should all be thrilled with that. And it hasn't happened overnight: a great deal of work has gone into it from a lot of people who have been driving forces.

(Source: FIFA)

## Ruthless Chelsea fight back to sink Man City



Chelsea came from behind to secure a 3-1 win at Manchester City and forge further clear at the top of the Premier League as a dramatic top-of-the-table clash ended in a mass brawl and two City players being sent off on Saturday.

Diego Costa, the league's leading marksman, scored his 11th of the season on the hour to equalise, substitute Willian notched on the counter-attack 10 minutes later and Eden Hazard sealed the deal in the 90th minute.

Gary Cahill had given City a deserved lead just before halftime, slicing the ball

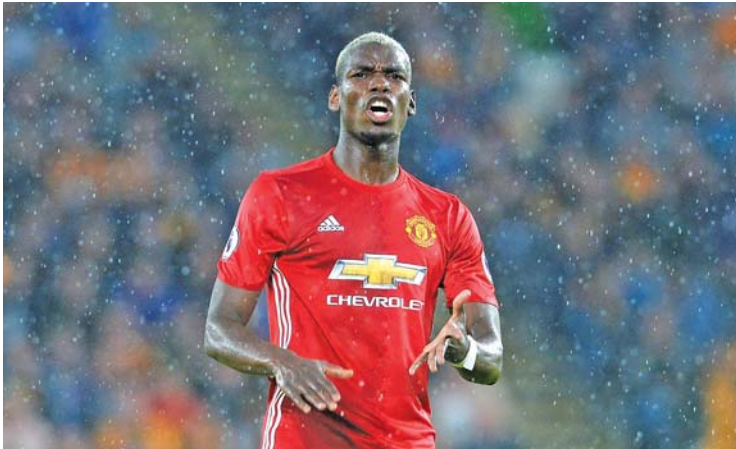
into his own net with a clumsy attempted clearance, and the home side looked ready to wrap up the points after the break as Kevin De Bruyne missed from three metres when it seemed easier to score.

In stoppage time, with Chelsea's eighth straight win sealed, mayhem broke out following a terrible tackle by Sergio Aguero on David Luiz.

The Argentine was shown a red card and, as players piled in, Fernandinho was also dismissed for pushing Cesc Fabregas over the advertising hoardings.

(Source: Reuters)

## Pogba: Man Utd is my house, I was always going to return



Paul Pogba has described Manchester United as his "house" and always expected to come return. The 23-year-old moved back to Old Trafford for a world-record fee during the summer, four years after leaving for Juventus for a nominal fee after struggling to break into the first team under Sir Alex Ferguson.

"I have United in my heart," he told Sky Sports. "It's my house. When I left I always knew that I would come back. For me, it's just normal. It's like I went on holiday and just came back. Seriously. Nothing really changed. I'm the same person."

Pogba featured in the EFL Cup

quarter-final victory over West Ham in midweek and hopes to face Hull City in the semi-finals on the way his first piece of silverware in the United first team.

"I'm looking forward to the semi-final against Hull," he added. "Hopefully we can get to Wembley." But there are bigger prizes on his radar in the long term."

Pogba won Serie A four times with Juventus, adding a further two Coppa Italia trophies as well, but understandably considers the 2015 Champions League final loss as the biggest game of his fledgling career.

(Source: Goal)

## Jose Mourinho: Premier League title may be out of United's reach



first season.

"Sometimes when a manager takes over a new club the differences in approach are not significant," he said.

"We could probably get better results if we weren't

trying to go in an opposite direction. I am not talking about tactical systems here. I am talking about the way this team wants to play and that is the most difficult thing in football to change."

Mourinho will welcome midfielders Paul Pogba and Marouane Fellaini back from suspension but captain Wayne Rooney will miss the trip to his former club Everton on Sunday as he serves a one-match ban.

Mourinho is also returning from a one-game touchline ban.

"I am willing to obey the rules but I would like to see the same rules for everyone," he said.

"I cannot kick a bottle of water, I accept that, just as I accepted the sending-off and the suspension without complaint. If those are the rules, fine. I just need to be sure they are the same for all the other managers."

(Source: Reuters)



# Andrea Anastasi confirms Iran's interest

**SPORTS** **d e s k** Anastasi says that he has negotiated with the Iranian Volleyball Federation.

The Italian coach is a candidate to take charge of Iran volleyball team as a replacement for Raul Lozano.

The Iranian federation will not extend the contract of Argentine coach.

Anastasi along with Sada Cruzeiro coach Marcelo Mendez and Bulgarian Radostin Stoychev are candidates to take charge of the Iranian team.

"I've received an offer from

the Iranian federation," the 56-year-old told sportowefakty.wp.pl.

Anastasi was a candidate to replace Stephane Antiga as Poland coach but it seems the European team is reluctant to sign the coach and is negotiating with Stoychev.

"I don't care about that and I completely respect their decision. I've already received offers from the other teams, including Iran," Anastasi added.

Chinese volleyball federation has also shown interest in signing the Italian coach.



## Hossein Faraki to stay as Saipa coach

**SPORTS** **d e s k** Saipa football club has rejected the resignation of the team's head coach Hossein Faraki.

Faraki stepped down from his position on Thursday after suffering a 2-0 home defeat against Esteghlal Khuzestan.

Faraki was named as Saipa coach in May as a replacement

for Majid Jalali but found himself under pressure following the poor results in Iran Professional League.

Under Faraki, Saipa has lost five times, drawn eight and won one in IPL and remains 15th in the table.

Faraki has also worked as head coach of Foolad, Sepahan, Pas and Naft Tehran.

Saipa will meet Sanat Naft in Abadan on Thursday.

## Iran to participate at Sapporo 2017 Asian Winter Games



Over 30 athletes will likely represent Iran at the Asian Winter Games taking place in Sapporo, Japan, in February.

Iran will send athletes in Alpine Skiing, Cross-Country and Snowboard to the competition.

Iran ice hockey team may also take part at the competition.

The games will take place in Sapporo from February 19 to 26.

Around 2,300 athletes and officials from across Asia are set to compete in the competition.

(Source: Tasnim)

## Rasoul Khatibi steps down as Machine Sazi coach



Machine Sazi coach Rasoul Khatibi has stepped down from his role after defeat against Persepolis.

On Friday, the Tabriz-based team was defeated against Persepolis 1-0 in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Under tutelage of Khatibi, Machine Sazi secured promotion to the Iran

Professional League (IPL) last season.

Machines Sazi has won just one match in IPL after 12 weeks, suffered eight defeats, and drawn three times.

Former Siahjamegan coach Farhad Kazemi is reportedly a candidate to replace Khatibi in Machine Sazi.

(Source: Tasnim)

## Liverpool have sent scouts to watch Sardar Azmoun

Liverpool have sent scouts to watch FC Rostov forward Sardar Azmoun.

And the 21-year-old forward could make history if he signs on at Anfield.

No Iranian players have ever played for Liverpool - and he could become the first one in the club's history.

However, Iran has already been represented in the top flight.

Karim Bagheri became the first when he made his debut in England for Charlton - although the spell ended after he played just 15 minutes all season.

Andranik Teymourian since turned out for Bolton before Ashkan Dejagah became No.3 for Fulham.

Azmoun, 21, has caught the eye with a series of impressive displays for Russian outfit Rostov.

He is just one of a number of players that Liverpool have been watching recently.



The Iranian is a versatile player that can play in a number of positions behind the main forward.

There is no indication that Liverpool will move for him any time soon but he the club are giving him a thorough watch.

Even if they did swoop January, he is not the sort of player that will suddenly add something different to what they already have.

He is one that would grow into the club and become a more prominent figure as time goes by.

Much like how Marko Grujic, signed last January before being loaned out for the rest of the season, is being dealt with in his debut campaign at the club.

When asked about a potential move away from Rostov, he said: "Ajax, PSV or Liverpool? I have not received any offers."

"If there are, then I'm going to take my time to look into it, whether it's come from Liverpool or other clubs."

(Source: DailyStar)

## Agency denies tax evasion by Ronaldo and Mourinho

The soccer agency Gestifute has denied that clients including Portuguese star Cristiano Ronaldo and Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho are involved in any tax evasion after a media consortium reported that they had used tax havens to handle tens of millions of euros in earnings.

A group of 12 European news outlets on Friday began publishing the results of months of investigations into a vast trove of more than 18 million financial documents, obtained by the German magazine Der Spiegel and dubbed the "Football Leaks".

"Both Cristiano Ronaldo and Jose Mourinho are fully compliant with their tax obligations with the Spanish and British tax authorities," Gestifute

said in a statement.

"Any insinuation or accusation made to Cristiano Ronaldo or Jose Mourinho over the commission of a tax offence will be reported to the legal authorities and prosecuted."

The European Investigative Collaborations (EIC) consortium, which includes Britain's Sunday Times, Portugal's Expresso and Spain's El Mundo, intends to release details of its findings over the next three weeks.

Reuters was unable to independently confirm the accusations.

Spanish prosecutors did not respond to requests for comment; nor did Real Madrid, Ronaldo's present and Mourinho's former club. Mourinho's new employer, Manchester United, said the

allegations predated his arrival there and that it would have no comment.

One of the publications, the French investigative portal Mediapart, said Ronaldo and his Portuguese compatriot Mourinho had benefited from a tax optimisation system developed by their agent Jorge Mendes, who owns Gestifute.

Mediapart said the system Gestifute employed for its various clients, using a network of offshore accounts and companies, represented a total potential loss to tax authorities of at least 185 million euros.

In its statement, Gestifute said that "neither Cristiano Ronaldo nor Jose Mourinho have ever been involved in legal proceedings regarding the



commission of a tax offense".

(Source: Reuters)

## I could have won more if I'd got serious: Bolt

Looking back at his astonishing career on the night he was named Athlete of the Year for the sixth time, Usain Bolt said his only real regret was not taking his sport more seriously at an earlier age.

"Maybe I would have been at four Olympics," the superstar Jamaican sprinter told reporters on Friday before being crowned IAAF male Athlete of the Year again on the back of his amazing Rio de Janeiro Games sprint triple-triple in August.

"The award is definitely a big deal, it proves all the hard work has paid off," he said after Olympic 10,000 meters champion and world record holder Almaz Ayana of Ethiopia took the women's equivalent.

"The fans helped vote for this and it's for the fans I keep doing it."

With nine Olympic golds in the drawer, Bolt plans to hang up his spikes next year after a farewell tour of his favorite venues.

He will run the 100 meters only before competing at the world championships in London where he will be gunning for his 12th and 13th world titles if he goes in the relay.

"When I look back the only real thing I think I would change was to have got more serious more quickly," said Bolt.

"I was relying more on my talent. If I'd got more serious I think I would have done a lot more in my career. It's shocking but it's true. Maybe if I'd started younger I'd have had four Olympics."

Despite his multiple titles and world records, Bolt said the race that would always have a particular place in his heart was the world junior championships in his home country when he won the 200 as a 15-year-old.

"That was special," he said. "That was the beginning. Jamaica 2002, where it all began. That was the biggest step."

However, it was a defeat five years later that made the biggest impact.

Bolt took the 200 silver behind American Tyson Gay at the 2007 Osaka world championships and it was a real wake-up call.

"After I lost I remember going to my coach saying, 'I really tried my best but what can I do to win because I really need to win?'" Bolt explained.

"He said: 'You're slacking off in the gym. If you want to win you have to get stronger.' So I was like 'alright'. I knew what I needed to do and from then I took the step and just worked and worked."

### ■ SPECTACULAR STYLE

Within nine months Bolt was the 100 world record holder and weeks later blasted himself into worldwide consciousness by winning the 100 and 200 and 4x100 relay at the Beijing Olympics in spectacular style.

Having found a way to win he was in no mood to stop, repeating the feat at London 2012 and, despite early season injuries, doing it again in Rio.

Now 30 and with his speediest days behind him, Bolt is trimming his workrate to enjoy one last season, running a series of 100 races only.

"Next year is mainly for the fans," said Bolt who always gives up a huge amount of time to sign autographs and pose for photos every time he races.

"It's a last opportunity for some people to see me run and a chance for me to say goodbye. I'd like to go back to some of my favorite places to run, Ostrava, Lausanne, maybe Paris."

And then that will be it. The man who has carried his troubled sport, sometimes single-handed, for a decade will step aside for the next generation.

There will be no Michael Phelps-style comeback at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics either.

"Oh no," he said. "My coach said, 'Do not retire and come back, don't ever do that'."

"It's a bit different for swimming but for most track and field athletes it never goes well."

"I'm still talking to people about what I will do afterwards and I definitely want to stay involved in the sport but at the moment I am just looking forward to doing nothing," said Bolt.

(Source: Reuters)

## Three Iranian swimmers to partake in FINA World Championships

Iran will participate in the 13th FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) with three swimmers.

Arsham Mirzaei, Amirabbas Amrollahi and Arya Nasimi Shad will represent Iran in the prestigious event, which will be staged in Windsor, Canada on December 6-11, 2016.

The team will be headed by Khashayar Hazrati.

Almost 1,000 of the world's best swimmers, from over 175 countries, are expected to attend for 6 days of intensive competition.

The global stars of the pool will compete for 46 gold medals.

The inaugural edition took place in Palma de Mallorca, Spain, in December 1993. 313 swimmers from 43 countries participated, breaking 15 World Records and establishing the event's paramount position in the sporting calendar.

(Source: Tasnim)

